

LUCKS AND TALISMANS

Author of

THE ROMANCE OF TREASURE TROVE

LUCKS AND TALISMANS

A CHAPTER OF POPULAR SUPERSTITION

By

CHARLES R. BEARD

“ . Christianos fidem in *verbis*, Judaeos in *lapidibus*
pretiosis, et Paganos in *herbis* ponere.”

MEIBOM *Scriptores*, vol. 1, 186.

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TO
FRANCIS HENRY CRIPPS-DAY
AN OLD FRIEND

WHOSE INTEREST IN THE
"FESTAL TRUMPET" OF EDENHALL
INSPIRED THE AUTHOR TO WRITE
THIS BOOK

FOREWORD

Lucks and Talismans does not profess to be a complete study of the one time universal belief in these tutelary objects. Nor do I imagine that the instances I have cited represent a tithe of those known to have existed or which yet survive, treasured possessions of the peoples and families in whose histories they have played in the past so prominent a part: valued if not for their one-time reputedly marvellous powers, then at least for their historical, romantic and often great artistic interest. The material, such as it is, that has gone to the making of this book was gathered in the first place to satisfy my own curiosity; nowhere could I find any comprehensive survey of the history of palladia either family or national, any study of those manifold influences that were reflected either in the nature of the lucks themselves or had impressed themselves upon the legends that, in the course of time, have become attached to them.

Most books of this nature do not spring Pallas-like in their full development from the head of their author. And *Lucks and Talismans* is no exception. It began, at the request of a friend, with some meagre notes upon the history of the Luck of Edenhall, or rather with some observations on a "festal trumpet" from Edenhall on which is painted a "portrait" of that most celebrated Luck. To an antiquary this trumpet presented many interesting problems. Its "Gothick" decoration, its heraldry, and the materials and method of its construction called for examination. I must confess that these problems have not yet been solved, and the folios of manuscript to which the study gave birth are still unprinted. But it will be readily understood that, as generally happens, "one thing led to another." The history of the Luck of Edenhall

involved the credentials of the Luck of Muncaster and of other lucks long associated with the north of England. Thence by way of the Horn of Oldenburg it was but a short step to the cult of lucks that flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Other lines of inquiry took me to Scotland. The Cup of the Macleods of Raasay in turn led me to the Fairy Banner of the Macleods of Dunvegan and by way of the Black Rood of Scotland to other national palladia, and to the Spear of Longinus, the renowned talisman of the Holy Roman Emperors

Here was material of no little interest, certainly to myself and possibly to others. But it was for the most part hidden away in the proceedings of learned societies, in books upon myths and folk-lore, in personal journals and diaries and even in sale catalogues. And it seemed worth while to bring it all together

If the fruits of my somewhat haphazard delving add a little to the sum of knowledge of the ways, manners and beliefs of our ancestors; if at the same time I have succeeded in entertaining—as I have certainly entertained myself—those who find these matters and their rare survival of interest, but have not time to satisfy their curiosity by personal inquiry, my purpose will have been achieved.

Lengthy passages from old authors, Latin and Greek, French and German, I have personally translated, except where translations of recognized authority already exist; and in extracts from old English and Scots chronicles I have extended all contractions, but I have refrained from any attempt to modernize the archaic and pleasing spelling.

It may be felt that in the chapter devoted to *The Luck of Edenhall*—and possibly in other places as well—I have been over generous with my foot-notes. This embarrassing generosity has, however, been unavoidable. So many hands have in the past toyed with this celebrated legend, pruned it here or added to it there, that any study of the growth of this story calls for the most careful documentation. Other legends, those that have not achieved the world-wide popularity of this arch-Luck, have needed less lavish annotation; in general they have changed but little since they were first printed between a century and a century

and a half ago. But even so some modifications or improvements have made their appearance, and such have been duly noted

I must make my acknowledgements to all those authors, especially Sir James Frazer and M. Ferdinand de Mély, from whom I have freely borrowed.

Lastly I must thank all those who have in any way contributed to the completeness, such as it is, of this book, but especially Mr. Joseph A. P. ffelan for much valued advice and many references; Mrs. Bernard Adams for most kindly translating passages in Swedish; and Mr. Cyril Bunt for translating a passage in *Starus godun*.

C. R. B.

Chelsea.

INTRODUCTION

"THERE are but few ancient families of whom there is not the legend that in the possession of some enchanted blade, or the preservation of some strangely-fashioned horn, or staff, or goblet, brought from far beyond the seas, or the maintenance of some old and quaint ancestral custom, was the well-being of their house involved."

B. B. WOODWARD: *A General History of Hampshire*, 1861-1869.¹

Outside the realms of fiction "Lucks," at least by that name, are few and far between. And such as bear this honourable title do so only by the circumstance of their left-handed kinship to the celebrated Luck of Edenhall, a talisman that in the sympathetic atmosphere of the Gothick Revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries inspired various counterparts. But many ancient families—many ancient peoples for the matter of that—are the fortunate possessors of objects that have for generations, for ages even, been accorded a respect amounting almost to veneration by virtue of the fact that they are precious heirlooms. Sir Walter Scott, the high-priest of the Gothick Revival, put into the mouth of the old Baron of Bradwardine words that most aptly convey this attitude. The Baron's family talisman, the Blessed Bear of Bradwardine, was "a golden goblet of a singular and antique appearance, moulded into the shape of a rampant bear" that had been, so he averred, "wrought by the command of St. Duthac, Abbot of Aberbrothock, for behoof of another baron of the house of Bradwardine, who had valiantly defended the patrimony of that monastery against certain encroaching nobles." And when it was produced for the admiration and honour of his guest, Waverley, he confessed that it had been "supposed, in old and Catholic times,

¹ vol. ii, p. 17.

to be invested with certain properties of a mystical and supernatural quality." But he added, "though I give not in to such *anulia*, it is certain it has always been esteemed a solemn standard cup and heirloom of our house; nor is it ever used but upon seasons of high festival."

Cups, though without doubt the objects to which such beliefs have most frequently become attached, are by no means the only relics of a forgotten or but dimly remembered past, on which such all important matters as family fortune or even family existence are said to depend. Llewellynn Jewett held that one of the essentials of a Luck should be its frangibility, and he would therefore have held only those Lucks made of glass to be true lucks. But a fairly extensive study of the subject proves beyond question that most of such talismans are of much more durable materials, and very wisely so. And trees are in the undoubted majority.

Woodward's able and learned editor and continuator, the Rev Theodore C. Wilks, when faced with the prospect of having to write of the Tichbourne Dole and its legendary history was moved to pen the passage which heads this necessary introduction, a passage that is particularly happy in that it explains in brief without addition by me the scope of the chapters which follow.

Belief in talismans, charms and amulets played a very large part in the lives of our forbears. In the main they were personal and not hereditary, they were individual and not communal. But there are—or were until this present rationalistic age and the crushing burden of taxation dethroned them and sent them to the salerooms of King Street and Bond Street, where their antiquity, their associations, legendary and otherwise, and their artistic value might meet with an alien appreciation to be measured in dollars—other objects of art or curiosity on which both the prosperity of their possessors and the persistence of their race had once been thought to hang.

In different ages and in mysterious circumstances these "Lucks" have found their way into the possession of families more or less noted; they have been cherished and handed down with a care, a strange blending of religion and superstition, from generation to generation; and the beliefs, the legends and the usages to which they have given rise—however wild, incredible and senseless—

have been accepted with an unhesitating faith, a veneration even not unmingled with fear, worthy of a better cause.

A deeply rooted belief in the powers of talismans and charms has for thousands of years permeated all ranks of society from the lowest to the highest. Royal crowns were decked with fortune-bringing gems and relics, monarchs have fought for them, kings have lost their kingdoms for lack of them. They have led to trials for treason, their possession has turned the trust and affection of a despot to hatred and suspicion of a minister.

Here and there in the pages that follow the reader will meet with familiar names, sometimes even great names, and may feel some surprise that those who bore them could have yielded to a superstition common to lesser men and women, but not to be expected of those of their pre-eminence. These incidents must be read in their due order if the reader gets so far. But two outstanding examples of believers in talismans spring at once to the mind.

Napoleon had an unshaken belief in his star and he had a no less firm belief in talismans and amulets, though his confidence in their efficacy did not prevent him from wearing upon occasions a shirt of mail, on the principle that prevention is better than cure. It is not, however, in his belief in prophylactics that we are at present interested, but rather in those objects that he acquired from time to time in the belief that they would further his destiny.

One of the first of these obtained by him was the dagger of Jean Parisot de la Valette, Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, which with its companion sword he stole from the Treasury of the Cathedral of St. John at Valetta in 1798. Both sword and dagger—the former being known as the *Épée de la Religion*—were a gift from Giovanni Angelo Medici, Pope Pius IV., to De la Valette in 1566 to mark his appreciation of his successful defence of Malta against the fleet of Soliman II. in 1565. Both weapons are German work, hilted with gold and enriched with enamel and gems; but while the hilt of the sword is still in pristine condition, that of the dagger is much worn, its present condition being due to the circumstance that it went with Napoleon upon all his campaigns for more than fifteen years, accompanying him at last into exile. And when he died he left

it to his son, the King of Rome. It can now be seen in the *Galérie d'Apollon* at the Louvre, while the sword is preserved in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

Another talisman owned by Napoleon was that known as the Talisman of Charlemagne, a fragment of the True Cross in an emerald case hung from a golden chain. It is said to have been given to the Frankish Emperor by the Empress Irene, and that when he died it was buried with him in his tomb at Aix la Chapelle. It escaped the pillage of the Emperor Otto in 1000, but was removed from the neck of the corpse in 1165 when the tomb was opened in the presence of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. It was then placed in the Treasury of the Cathedral at Aix la Chapelle, where it remained until presented to Napoleon who in turn gave it to Queen Hortense, who prized it greatly. Still later it came into the hands of the Emperor Napoleon III.¹

Gloriana herself, if not a firm believer in magic and talismans, at least believed, like the Corsican, in taking no unnecessary risks—for there was always a chance that “there might be something in it.” When therefore the day and hour of her coronation were to be determined, these important matters were not decided upon until she had consulted her tame magician, Dr. John Dee, who was called upon to cast Her Grace’s horoscope to determine the most auspicious time for this event. And towards the very close of her reign, when already the old Scytheman had laid his hand upon her, she accepted from Sir John Stanhope, in the hope of prolonging her life, “a piece of gold of the bigness of an angel, full of characters, which he said an old woman of Wales had bequeathed to her on her deathbed; and whereupon he discoursed how the said testatrix by virtue of the piece of gold lived to the age of 120 years, and in that age died, commending the said piece of gold to be carefully sent to her Majesty, alleging further that so long as she wore it on her body she could not die. The queen in confidence took the said gold and hung it about her neck.”² Her Grace’s confidence or optimism was not, however, justified; and within a few months the last and greatest of the Tudors

¹ W Jones *Crowns and Coronations*, p 341.

² Margaret Strickland. *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol iv, p. 770.

made her final journey to Westminster, and James of Scotland sat upon the Stone of Destiny in St. Edward's Chair, and proved beyond any question that where that Stone rested the descendants of Scots should rule.

The belief in talismans, personal lucks that may be handed on from father to son generation after generation, is by no means dead. So long as a man feels that he should walk outside a ladder, and in the road at the imminent risk of immediate extinction under the wheels of the Juggernauts of modern traffic, rather than beneath it and incur the displeasure of the gods; so long as he will "touch wood" or refuse to sit down thirteen at table—so long will a belief in the potency of lucks persist. The nineteenth century is popularly supposed to have been an age of sweet reason or at least of hard commonsense, an age of heavy Sunday dinners, antimacassars and appalling but useful furniture. But it was as certainly an age in which a professed belief at least in talismans thrived. Doubtless the Gothick Revival of the eighteenth century had much to do with it. Scott with his *Talisman*, G. P. R. James and his romances did much to encourage it. Even Thackeray's *Legend of the Rhine* and Barham's *Legends* with their gorgeous nonsense could not counteract the pernicious influence that flowered in the pseudo-mediaeval extravagances of the Coronation of King George IV. and the Tournament at Eglinton. Very many talismans must, though ancient in themselves, be ascribed to this period. Romantic legends were built up about them, nor did their owners hesitate to indulge in gross forgery to support those spurious legends. Some few, however, were honest enough—gifts from friends, gifts from lovers, quaint stones from far corners of the earth, relics of battles or adventures to which some sentimental value might be attached by both giver and receiver. Such without doubt was the moon-stone that was given to Emma Hamilton, Nelson's Emma, by Lieutenant Duval, R.N., which with its ivory case inscribed "Emma Hamilton, Her Luck" was sold at Christie's on February 28th, 1933, for twenty-two guineas to a New York dealer. Of the same kind, to take a very modern instance, was the shilling bequeathed in 1933 by Mr. Joseph Harper Stringer to his son. Mr. Stringer, formerly a cabinet manufacturer of Stourbridge, in

Worcestershire, left the quite comfortable fortune of £14,571, but his most treasured possession was a shilling, the first coin taken in his business fifty-two years before.¹ Of such must many family lucks have been made.

Talismans have in the past met with considerable though sporadic attention. And such studies have been devoted to them in the large as the offspring of certain well established beliefs, rather than to them individually and to the scenes in which they have taken part or to the events to which they have led. Lucks, however, form a genus of talisman that has hitherto received but scant attention. Some few antiquaries and others have told and retold the legends attached to some three or four well-known examples; and in almost every case they have done little more than repeat in bowdlerized form what Jewitt published in *The Reliquary* of 1879 and 1880. They have, however, figured more or less prominently in most books upon folk-lore, mythology, fairy stories and legends. But so far as I am aware no attempt has been made to survey this branch of folk-lore, to study the origins of the belief that such objects were lucky. Only one writer has offered a closely reasoned explanation of the origins and causes of the legends that have gathered about a certain group of such lucks. Mr. E. S. Hartland, in his *Science of Fairy Tales*, made a close examination of those innumerable stories native either to Scandinavian countries or to those where the Scandinavian dominion was at one time predominant, which record the ravishing of a cup from the fairies, elves or trolls. From certain elements common to all of them he came to the conclusion that the vessels to which they were attached had originally been used for libations at the Eastertide feasts of Odin.

This deduction may be true of the practices that have occasionally been involved in their use in the past; but it cannot be true of the cups themselves. The Ballafletcher Glass was, we know, only used at Christmas and Easter. But neither this nor any other talismanic cup that survives can claim so great an antiquity. Nor, taking the legend of the Luck of Edenhall as the archetype of such traditions, does this explanation account for the attachment of similar stories to horns, rings, spindles, whistles, flags and many

¹ *Sunday Express*, September 24th, 1933.

other objects that can neither actually nor in prototype have had any connexion with such ceremonies.

Many causes have contributed to the gathering into this one group of these objects widely different in use, in appearance and in material, and to the elevation of domestic utensils, simple or magnificent, into Lucks. The beliefs, the crimes, the illicit recreations, the duties and the vanities of our ancestors have all played their parts in the creation of these Lucks.

The primitive and uninstructed mind in seeking an explanation of the simple and the commonplace is peculiarly prone to fly to the incredible and the miraculous, to convert the normal and familiar in life into the strange and the prodigious.

"No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scope of nature, no distemper'd day,
No common wind, no custom'd event,
But they will pluck away his natural cause,
And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
Abortives, presages and tongues of heaven."

(*King John*. Act iii,"sc. iv.)

An almost inevitable and perfectly logical outcome of such an attitude is the development of the belief that some being powerful or omnipotent, good or evil, had adopted the believers for his own, that the manifestations of nature are the evidences of his watchfulness and the certainty of a high destiny awaiting the individual or community.

Likewise in its search for the reason for the existence of objects that it cannot understand, it naturally associates them with some mysterious and superhuman end. Ignorance attaches more or less readily a superstitious veneration to whatever is derived from a remote or unknown origin. The superseded weapons and implements of a long vanished race become the charms and talismans of its superstitious successors; the ensigns of forgotten tenures become the lucks of the families to whom the lands have later fallen; the memorials of forgotten ancestors become perhaps the relics of potent saints and the palladia of their descendants. Nor has ignorance failed to include even

the most ordinary of utensils among the objects of its devotion or fear and to erect them into potent charms.

These circumstances account satisfactorily for both the talismanic properties and the other marvellous qualities which are claimed to be possessed in varying degrees by many of these family lucks. They avoid the necessity for credence in the conscious survival of mythical beliefs handed down from the dark ages, an explanation of the belief in Lucks which always seems to me far-fetched. The belief in talismans is an instinctive one in all human beings. The tendency is in the blood just as the tendency to have influenza is in the blood; and neither the belief nor the disease is necessarily a matter of direct infection. But in both cases the tendency is inherited from some far off and forgotten ancestor.

So great indeed is yet this veneration for reputed talismans, not only among the peasantry but among educated people, that the way of the student is rendered doubly hard. For though professing in general an entirely modern disbelief in their potency, their owners are prone to resent the desecrating examination and comment of the antiquary and historian, lest ill-luck should follow the shattering of an age-old legend.

In the following chapters I have gathered together and retold so far as possible in their earliest documented form the legends attached to some fifty or so lucks and palladia; I have examined them from the standpoints of the historian, the archaeologist and the folk-lorist; and I have endeavoured to trace the causes that have led to the formation and modification of the beliefs attached to them.

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LUCKS AND TALISMANS

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CHAPTER I

PALLADIA

“ . . . the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us, . . . And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf ”

Exodus xxxii, 1-4.

“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.”

Exodus xiii, 19

IN an age when every portent in the heavens, every convulsion of the earth, every disturbance in the depths of the sea was thought to be not only a manifestation of the power of those omnipotent beings who ruled the destinies of men, but evidence also of their interest in mortal affairs, and an indication of their wishes, it is not surprising to find evidence that the means whereby the divine will had been made known was, if of a permanent nature, treasured by its recipients, as proof whereby doubters might be confounded. The foundation of a city, always a matter of the most lofty importance, was a task not to be undertaken without guidance from above. If after the due ceremonies the god signified his approval of the spot chosen by hurling a thunderbolt at it, to the very great danger of his votaries, the instrument of divine approbation was revered as evidence of supernatural patronage and a guarantee of future benefits and

permanent protection. Cyzicus in Mysia was signalled out in this way, and the fiery stone with marks of iron upon it was preserved as the city's palladium.¹

Such rude blocks, however, inspired little reverence in the beholder. The god, it was felt, could and should do better, and it cannot have been long before the temptation to improve on the works of nature and to mould them into some semblance of the deity or of some attribute of the deity, whereby they might be recognized as such by the casual beholder, overcame their possessors.

The outstanding example of such supposedly miraculous images, and one that has furnished posterity with a generic title for all objects reputed to have acted as guardians and fortune bringers, was the Palladium of Troy, the statue of Pallas Athena, upon the preservation of which the safety of the city depended.

The Palladium is said to have been an image not of Athena herself, but of her foster-sister, Pallas the daughter of Triton, whom the goddess mortally wounded in a wrestling match. It was placed with the ægis about its neck by the goddess in memory of her foster-sister next to the image of Zeus upon Olympus. And when Electra, having been dishonoured, fled to this image, Zeus hurled it from heaven on to the earth where it fell at Troy. There Ilus, who had just been praying the gods for some favourable omen on the foundation of his city, took it up and built a sanctuary to it. By some writers it is said to have been dedicated by Electra; by others it is said to have been given by Zeus to Dardanus. But by all it was believed to have indicated the spot which the goddess would deign to possess. Ilus was satisfied with this omen, and his belief in it was confirmed by an oracle of Apollo that so long as the figure remained within the walls, so long would Troy remain unconquered.

What this figure was like we do not know. Some say it was a figure of wood that could move its eyes and shake the spear it held. Others that it consisted of the bones of Pelops sold by the Scythians to the Trojans. Still others describe it as a statue three cubits high, standing with its legs together, holding in its right hand a spear and in its left a spindle and distaff.

¹ Joannes Laurentius *De Ostentis*, cp 7, p 281

With regard to its later history, equally apocryphal, as much diversity exists. Apollodorus, who tells the most circumstantial and therefore the most untruthful tale—supposing of course that there is any truth in the matter at all—says that when the Greeks realized that Troy was unconquerable so long as the magic figure remained within the city's walls, Ulysses and Diomedes volunteered to steal it. By night they entered the city, Ulysses in the disguise of a beggar. Recognized by Helen, the latter threw himself upon her mercy, and she, by that time thoroughly tired of young Paris and the rest of her rather pious "in-laws," helped him to steal the figure with which, after slaughtering numerous Trojans with the aid of Diomedes, he escaped to the ships. Other versions give the greater credit to Diomedes, though some authors say that he laid blood-stained hands upon the sacred image, an act of the grossest impiety.

Troy having fallen, the Greeks sailed away, the Palladium being entrusted to the especial care of Agamemnon; and Harpocration says that when the Argives put into Athens on the way home, Demophon, son of Theseus, stole it and slew many of the Argives who tried to take it back. Other renderings of the story say that the Argives put into Phalerum, and that during a foraging expedition, which may be interpreted as meaning general pillage and rapine, they were slain, their bodies lying upon the field of battle uncorrupted and untouched by wild beasts by virtue of the Palladium.

A last version, for which Polyænus is responsible, says that Demophon received the Palladium from Diomedes to preserve, and that when Agamemnon demanded it back Demophon gave the real Palladium to an Athenian named Buzyges to take to Athens, palming off a copy upon Agamemnon.

Certainly from a very early time there existed a tradition that at some period during the return from Troy some substitution had taken place, and one version of the legend made use of by Virgil says that this substitution had been effected before the fall of the city and that it was the real Palladium that Æneas took with him on his flight to Carthage and thence to Lavinium in Italy.

In later times many cities took advantage of this possibility to claim the possession of this marvellous image, much as later still every saintly relic of any outstanding potency could be seen in at least half a dozen cathedral treasuries. Athens had one which in Roman times was replaced by a new one and dedicated to the gods of the city by order of the Pythian Apollo. There was a second at Argos—that said to have been brought home by Agamemnon. Lavinium claimed that it had never been removed thence to Rome; Luceria and Siris both asserted that they possessed this image.¹

An Olympian origin was also claimed for the golden statue of a lamb that was the palladium of the great city of Mycenae. According to Accasius it was preserved in the royal palace but was stolen thence with fell intent by Thyestes.²

"Adde huc quod mihi portento caelestum pater
Prodigium misit regni stabilimen mei
Agnum inter pecudes aurea clarum coma,
Quondam Thyestem clepere aurum ex regia."

Second only to the Palladium of Troy among these heaven-sent evidences of divine watchfulness was the Ancile of Rome. In the eighth year of the reign of Numa Pompilius a fearful pestilence attacked the people of Rome. Her citizens were reduced to desperate straits by this calamity, but were suddenly comforted by the report that a brazen shield had fallen from heaven into the hands of Numa. The king, whose relations with the nymph Egeria, who Ovid says was his wife, and the Muses were of the most amicable description, received assurances from them that this target had been sent by the gods to stay the plague and to be for the future a guard to the city. At the same time a voice of divine majesty and power was heard declaring that Rome should be mistress of the world so long as she preserved this sacred pledge. And confirmation of these wondrous happenings was almost immediately afforded

¹ Strabo vi, p. 264; Serv. *ad Æn* ii, 166 *et seq.*, Plutarch *Camill*, 20, Tacitus *Annales* xv, 41, Dionys ii, 66

² The passage is preserved in a fragment of Accius' *Atreus*. See Apollodorus. *Bibliotheca*, edit. R. Wagner, p. 185

by the sudden cessation of the sickness. To preserve so inestimable a treasure was Numa's first care, and he was advised to have made eleven other targets of the same dimensions and form as the divine prototype, in order that were any attempt made by a daring enemy to steal this talisman, as Ulysses had stolen the Palladium of Troy, the would-be ravisher might not know the fatal shield. This task was entrusted to Veturius Mamurius, his armourer, and so successfully did the latter carry out the work that Numa himself could not tell one shield from another. The care of these shields was then entrusted to the twelve Salii, the leaping priests of Mars Gradivus, and they were hung up within the temple of the god, only being removed thence once every year in the god's month of March to be carried by their scarlet clad guardians in procession about the city. On the 30th of the month they were restored to the temple, but during the whole ceremony, which is said to have lasted thirteen days, no one might marry or set about any business.

Apart from its tutelary duties the shield also possessed the quality of a victory-bringer in war, and every general on the eve of his departure on a campaign entered the temple of the Palatine Hill and shook the shield, at the same time crying out—*Mars, watch!* A later practice was to shake the spear held in the hand of the statue of the god.

Authors ascribed the ill-success of the Emperor Otho against Vitellius to his departure from Rome during the festival.

Totemism does not seem to have played any very large part in the creation of these early city palladia. At Thebes, however, there stood, according to Pausanias, a stone lion dedicated by Hercules,¹ and in the course of time it would seem to have acquired something of a talismanic character. The Herculean lion apparently was definitely associated with the security and prosperity of Sardes, the capital of Lydia. Meles, King of Sardes, who boasted of his descent from the lion-hero Hercules, rendered his city impregnable by carrying round its walls a lion cub, the monstrous offspring of one of his concubines. Unfortunately at one point the precipice on which the walls stood was so steep that it was thought no human being could find foothold, and Meles did not trouble to protect that spot.

¹ Pausanias, ix, 17, 2.

And it was at this point that the Persians subsequently climbed into the citadel.¹ The Herculean lion appears upon the coins of Sardes; and Croesus, King of Lydia, dedicated a golden lion, emblematic of his city, at Delphi.²

One of the oldest of such beliefs is that the preservation of a state or city depends upon the preservation within its bounds of the corporeal relics of some national hero either mythical or historical, and that the destruction, loss or scattering of the one foretells the eclipse or conquest of the other. The violation of royal tombs so frequent in the chronicles of ancient conquests was therefore no mere grandiloquent gesture: it was a deadly blow struck at the prosperity of the kingdom. It was for this reason that Assurbanipal carried off to Assyria the bones of the kings of Elam.³ For this cause the Moabites burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime,⁴ and Lysimachus is said to have opened the graves of the kings of Epirus and scattered the bones of the dead.⁵

The possession of Tarentum was said to have been secured to the Parthenon for ever by grinding the bones of the Spartan Phalantus, the founder of the city, to powder and strewing their dust in the market place.⁶ Similarly the ashes of Solon scattered about Salamis were supposed to secure the possession of that island to the Athenians.⁷ Troy was deemed impregnable so long as the tomb of Laomedon, old Priam's father, remained intact and undisturbed over the Scaean Gate,⁸ the western entrance to the city. When Perdiccas, King of Macedonia, was dying he pointed out to his son, Argæus, the place where he was to be buried, telling him that if his bones and those of his successors were laid there the kingdom would remain in his family.⁹ When Alexander the Great died it was predicted that the land in which his body should be buried would be prosperous and inviolate for ever.¹⁰

¹ Herodotus, I, 84

² Herodotus, I, 50

³ R. F. Harper *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 116.

⁴ Amos, II, 1

⁵ Pausanias, I, 7-9 *et seq*

⁶ Justin, III, 4, 13

⁷ Aristides *Or. XLVI*, vol II, p. 230, edit. Dindorf.

⁸ Servius on Virgil's *Aeneid*, II, 241

⁹ Justin, VII, 2, 2 *et seq*

¹⁰ *Ælian. Var. hist.*, XII 64.

So vital to the safety of the state were such talismans held to be that their situation, the fact that they existed even, was kept a profound secret, and one that was guarded with the greatest care.

At Athens there were certain secret graves or chests (Θήκαι) on which the safety of the city was supposed to depend, and Dinarchus tells us that the Council of the Areopagus alone knew where they were situated.¹ Of these the most potent was that of Œdipus.² Originally the situation of the grave appears to have been kept as a state secret, which was only communicated by a high magistrate (probably, suggests Frazer, the titular king) to his successor when he was about to die or lay down his office.³ The grave was apparently beside the Areopagus, Valerius Maximus says between the Areopagus and the Acropolis.⁴

Homer believed Œdipus died and was buried at Thebes.⁵ Aristides⁶ and the scholiast on Euripides⁷ assert that he was buried at Colonus. A third legend asserts that he was first buried at Ceus in Bœotia, whence his bones were removed to Eteonus and buried in a sanctuary of Demeter.⁸

The attitude of the ancient world to the desecration of the graves of national heroes and the belief in the calamities that were believed inevitably to follow thereon is admirably illustrated in Plutarch's *De Gemo Socratis*, more generally known as the *Return of the Theban Exiles*. In the winter of 379-378 B.C. a party of Theban patriots were preparing to surprise the Cadmeia, the citadel of the city, that two years before had been betrayed to the Spartans. While awaiting, bloody murder in their hearts, the signal to start the butchery, two of them, Pheidolaus of Haliartus and Theocritus, talked together not of the chances of success or failure, but of the recent archaeological activities of Agesilaus, King of Sparta. It is to my mind one of

¹ Dinarchus 1, 9

² Sophocles *Œdipus Coloneus*, 1518-1534, 1760-1765, Aristides *Or.* XLVI vol II, p. 230, edit Dindorf

³ Sophocles *loc. cit.*

⁴ v. 3 Ext. 3

⁵ *Iliad*, xxiii, 679 sq

⁶ *Or.* XLVI, vol II, p. 230, edit Dindorf

⁷ *Phœnissæ*, 1707

⁸ Scholiast of Sophocles *Œdipus Coloneus*, 91.

the most pleasing passages in the whole of Greek literature Every word of it rings true.

The tomb of Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryo and the mother of Hercules, was believed to be situated at Haliartus in Bœotia, where it was regarded, we must believe, with something of the awe accorded to a palladium. Agesilaus, King of Sparta, had recently been to Haliartus, and being overcome like many other despots of later times by curiosity to look upon the corporeal remains of the departed great, he sought and obtained from the people of Haliartus permission to have the tomb of this distinguished lady opened. When, however, the entrance was unsealed there was no sign of the body to be discovered and only a few pieces of oxidized brass rewarded his inquisitiveness. Sacrilege had, however, taken place and the outraged patroness of Haliartus immediately vented her wrath upon the graceless guardians of her supposed resting place by blighting their crops and causing the neighbouring lake to rise.

The palladium of Bœotian Thebes was, however, the grave of Dirce, the unhappy wife of Lycus who was bound by Amphion and Zethus to a bull and so dragged to death. And having referred to Agesilaus' somewhat jejune efforts at practical archaeology and the untoward results thereof Theocritus continued, "Nor yet are the Lacedæmonians themselves clear of the wrath of heaven, as is shown by the portents about which Lysanondas was lately conferring with us. He is now off to Haliartus to fill in the tomb again and to offer libations to Alcmena and Aleus, of course in accordance with some oracle, not knowing who Aleus was. When he comes back from there he intends to investigate the tomb of Dirce, which is unknown to the Thebans, except those who have acted as Hipparchs. The outgoing magistrate takes his successor in office, with no one else present, and shows it him at night; they perform certain fireless rites over the tomb, carefully obliterate all traces, and go off under cover of darkness by separate ways. And much chance, I think, they will have of finding it, Pheidolaus! For most of those who have served legally as Hipparchs are now in exile; I might say all, except Gorgides and Plato, whom they fear too much to examine. But the present magistrates

receive the spear and the seal in the Cadmeia, and know absolutely nothing."¹

The same secrecy which shrouded the existence and location of the talismans of the cities of ancient Greece also enveloped some but not all those of classical Rome. Rome in her pride was guarded by a multitude of palladia both fictile and natural, and almost every incident of her legendary past would seem to have contributed some stock or stone or some antique piece of bronze to this amazing collection of oddments which would have delighted the heart of a Tradescant or a Thoresby. In the innermost adytum of the temple of Vesta, to which none might penetrate save only the virgin guardians and the Pontifex Maximus himself, were concealed the sacred relics which formed the *fatale pignus imperii*, the pledge granted by divine dispensation for the permanency of the Roman sway. What the object was none knew. It was supposed by some to have been the Palladium brought by Æneas from Troy; by others it was said to be the Samothracian gods taken by Dardanus to Troy and brought thence to Italy with the Palladium. But all agreed that it was something endowed with an awful sanctity, and that it was preserved—it was said—in a small earthen jar closely sealed, beside which in the sanctuary stood a second of precisely similar form but empty.²

It was in rescuing this earthen jar from the temple when it was burned down in 241 B.C. that L. Caecilius Metellus, then Pontifex Maximus, lost his eyesight. For this act of heroism he was rewarded by a statue in the Capitol, and the privilege of always attending the Senate in a carriage or chariot, an honour that had never before been granted.

Even the sacred fire that burned within the temple was held to guard the city, and its extinction was considered as a most fearful prodigy emblematic of the extinction of the state. The unfortunate Vestal who let it out must have regarded it with equal dread for such a calamity brought her a sound flogging by the Pontifex Maximus, a flogging all the more serious for her in that it took place

¹ A. O. Prickard, *The Return of the Theban Exiles*, p. 23

² Dionys, i, 69, ii, 66, Plutarch, *Camill*, 20, Livy, xxvi, 27, Lampridius, *Elagab*, 6, Ovid, *Fast* vi, 365, Lucan ix, 994

in the dark when of course the dealer of the stripes could not see where his blows landed on his naked victim.

Many towns in classical times possessed talismans that are apparently unconnected with any recognized superstition. And so securely were they hidden, and their existence concealed from all save the highest officers of the state that even to-day their nature is a matter of speculation. Messenia, in the Peloponnesus, was supposed to be protected by a "certain secret object" thought to have been a copy of the Mysteries of the Great Goddesses engraved upon a plate of tin. Pausanias relates that this "certain secret thing" was taken by Aristomenes in the days of Messenia's downfall and buried by him on the loneliest part of Ithone. Many years afterwards a dream revealed to Epiteles, the Argive general, the son of Aeschines, where it lay concealed in a bronze urn between a yew tree and a myrtle on Ithone.¹

Hylle, in Illyria, was guarded by an unusual talisman. When Jason consulted the Delphic oracle, Apollo gave him two tripods which possessed the property of rendering inviolable by an enemy the land in which they were set up. One of these Jason presented to the people of Hylle, who buried it deep beneath the threshold of their city gate, and there it was still supposed to be hidden in the third century B.C.²

The town of Tegea, in Arcadia, also possessed a talisman of an unusual character, no less than one of the brazen snaky locks of the Gorgon. The legend attached to it was that Hercules at one period of his career contemplated an attack upon Lacedaemon and sought as allies in this adventure Cepheus, King of Tegea, and his twenty sons. Cepheus was, however, unwilling to leave his dominion unprotected against Argive hostility. Hercules therefore begged from Athena this brazen tress and gave it in a pitcher into the keeping of Cepheus' daughter, Asterope, with instructions that if the city were attacked she was to take it on to the town walls and there, with her eyes averted, to lift it thrice in the face of the enemy. Thereupon they would immediately flee.³

¹ Apollodorus ii, 7, 3, Apostolus xiv, 38, Suidas and Photus. *Lexicon V. πολλόν Γοργόειον*.

² Apollonius Rhodius *Argonaut*, iv, 527-536 with schol. on 532.

³ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, iv, 20, 4, iv, 26, 7.

It has been suggested that the immediate cause of the expected flight of the enemy was a violent storm, the use of a lock of hair being a well-known method of raising such disturbances.

Belief in the effectiveness of these talismans survived into Christian times. Two palladia guarded the ancient city of Edessa, the modern Urfa in Mesopotamia. Of these one was the body of the Apostle Thomas, which the Emperor Alexander Severus brought thither from the scene of his martyrdom in India about the year 230. The actual implement of his martyrdom, the spear or *glaive* with which the high priest of some heathen idol ran the missionary through the body, remained behind to be discovered centuries later by the Portuguese in the city of Meliapur, whence it was removed and lodged in the Cathedral at Goa¹ The other talisman was nothing less than a letter written by our Lord "Abagar, king of this city, desired to have an epistle written with the hand of our Lord, for if any men moved war against this city, they took a christian child, and set him on the gate, and he should there read the epistle, and the same day, what for the virtue of the writing of our Saviour, as for the merits of the apostle, the enemies fled or else made peace."²

This belief was not alone confined to the East and to countries bordering the Mediterranean. Traces of it can be discovered in Scandinavia, where, however, the defensive quality of the talisman was overlaid by belief in the fruitfulness of the royal relics. In the *Heimskringla* it is related of Frey, the Scandinavian god of fertility, and incidentally the progenitor of the royal house of the semi-mythical Ynglings, that he reigned as King of Sweden at Upsala. The years of his reign were fruitful, and his subjects laid this fruitfulness to his account. So when he died his people did not burn his body, but buried him beneath a great mound and sacrificed to him in the belief that so long as his body remained in Sweden so long should the land have plenty and peace. And for three years after his death they poured the yearly tribute to him into the mound through three windows, the gold

¹ J. A. S. Collin de Plancy *Dictionnaire critique des Reliquiss*, 1821-22, vol. III, p. 156

² *The Golden Legend — The Life of S. Thomas the Apostle.*

by one, the silver by a second, and the copper by a third.¹

In a like manner the body of his descendant, Halfdan Svarte, who reigned over that part of Norway that corresponds with the present Stift of Oslo and was the father of Harald Haarfager, was on his death, at the early age of forty in 860, distributed in four places, the head being laid in a barrow at Steen in Ringerike on the Steens Fjord.²

The persistence of this belief that the bones of a national hero may become the palladium of his country and the victory-bringing talisman of his army is evidenced by Froissart's account of the death of Edward Long Shanks:

" . . . the said King Edward died at Berwick: and when he saw that he should die, he called before him his eldest son, who was King after him, and there, before all the barones, he caused him to swear, that as soon as he were dead, that he should take his body, and boyle it in a cauldron, till the flesh departed cleane from the bones, and then to bury the flesh, and keep still the bones; and that as often as the Scotts should rebell against him, he should assemble the people against them, and carry with him the bones of his father; for he believed verily, that if they had his bones with them, that the Scots should never attain any victory against them. The which thing was not accomplished, for when the King died his son carried him to London."³

Nor for that matter is the belief yet dead in certain parts of Europe. In 1833 the Russian Saint, Seraphim of Saroff, whose name is always associated with the celebrated miracle-working ikon of the Holy Virgin of Koursk, died leaving behind him, like Merlin and Thomas the Rhymer and an army of other seers, a whole host of prophecies. Many of these have been fulfilled. He foretold the fall of Czarist Russia and the reign of the Bolsheviki. But he also asserted that the centenary of his death would see the beginning of the end of the Soviet rule. The Russian, despite the boasts of those who maintain his intellectual emancipation and superiority, is at heart as superstitious,

¹ *Hamskringla*, translated by W. Morris and E. Magnusson, vol. 1, pp. 4 and 22-24.

² *Hamskringla*, vol. 1, p. 86 *et seq.*

³ Froissart's *Chronicle*, Berners' translation, edit. 1812, p. 40.

as prone to heed warnings and portents, and as confident in the powers of talismans and amulets, as his Scythian ancestors of more than two thousand years ago. And only recently the dire prognostications of the Saint of Saroff received confirmation in another portent.

On Sunday, January 27th, 1924, to the mournful strains of the *Internationale* the mortal remains of Lenin were placed in the mausoleum prepared for them before the walls of the Kremlin at Moscow, the very heart of Bolshevik, as it was of Imperial, Russia. Embalmed and encased in a glass sarcophagus, it was hoped that the Thaumaturge would remain uncorrupted for ever, a symbol and the talisman of the Red State that he had founded. None of the orthodox saints were reported to have performed a miracle more astonishing in the moujiks' eyes than this expected defiance of all the ordinary laws of nature. It would endow Lenin with a posthumous authority which to the best majority of the illiterate population—peasant and proletarian alike—would afford ample justification for any enormity. But the embalmers did not do their work well, and in the early part of 1932 it was rumoured that the palladium of the state was shewing signs of decay. Worse—the red demi-god was turning an imperial purple. It is scarcely surprising to those who know something of Russia and of Russian character that the threatened decay and collapse of Lenin's body caused something like consternation in the Soviets.

CHAPTER II

STATUAE AVERRUNCAE

" Io fui della città che nel Batista
Mutò'l primo padrone ond' ei per questo
Sempre con l'arte sua la farà trista:
E se non fosse che in sul passo d'Arno
Rimane ancor di lui alcuna vista,
Quei cittadin, che poi la rifondano
Sopra il cener che d'Attila rimase,
Avrebbero fatto lavorare indarno "

Dante: *Inferno*, Canto xiii, ll, 143-150.

WHEN Moses set up Nehushtan, the Brazen Serpent, in the wilderness that thereby the plague of fiery serpents that had settled upon the wandering Jews might be stayed, the prophet, despite his own fulminations against wizardry, was making use of a form of eastern magic recognized as efficacious long before his day and long after.

Mas'udi, in the tenth century, relates that when Alexander the Great was building his name-city in the Nile Delta, fearsome monsters came from the sea at night-time and destroyed the work. To prevent this Alexander and two draughtsmen descended to the bottom of the sea in a glass-sided box, a primitive diving bell, and made drawings of these monsters in their element; from which models were made and set up about the walls upon pillars, thus for a time successfully combating this hostile influence.¹

Archaeologists searching the ruins of Carthage have found buried beneath the floors of the houses bronze figures of flies, serpents and rats to keep away their living prototypes. And Gregory of Tours, writing in the second half of the sixth century, records that according to a tradition

¹ B. de Maynard and Pavet de Courteille *Les Prairies d'Or*, II, 425 ff.

current in his day the City of Paris had in ancient times been protected by a charm, so that fire might not prevail over it; nor might any serpent or dormouse appear within the walls. And to this he adds—"Not long ago, as they were scouring the arches of the bridge, to carry the filth, with which they were almost filled, they found there a dormouse and a serpent of brass, which being carried away thence, ever since there have been seen an infinite number of dormice and serpents in the city."¹

By an easily understood extension of the principle it was held possible to repel or prevent the attack of human vermin, by making the similitude of an expected enemy and placing it in the road of his anticipated advance.

That cheerful old gossip Olympiodorus of Thebes, whose pages, so far as they survive, are full of entertaining if not strictly historical matters, has something to say of these *statuæ averruncae*.² His authority for the following incident was the principal actor, a certain Valerius, "a most distinguished person"

"In the days of the Emperor Constantius,³ at the time that Valerius was Praefect in Thrace, it was bruited abroad that a treasure had been discovered. When Valerius came to the place, he learned from the inhabitants that this treasure was a sacred offering and that statues had been consecrated in that very place by an ancient rite. Of these matters he wrote to the Emperor, and received an imperial rescript by which he was ordered to dig up these precious objects. When therefore the place had been dug up three complete statues made of silver were found. They were of a barbarian appearance with their arms bound behind them; they were clad, moreover, in embroidered robes of the barbarian fashion and had their locks hanging down; their faces were turned towards the north, which is the region where the barbarians live. As soon as the statues were taken up, even within a few days, the first tribe of the Goths overran the whole of Thrace; and within a short time there were inroads of Huns and Sarmatians into Illyria and Thrace: for the sites of this consecration were between

¹ *Historia Francorum*, lib. viii, cap. 33

² *Olympiodori Thebani Fragmenta—Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, edit. Carl Müller, 1851, vol. iv, p. 63, § 27.

³ Presumably the Emperor who reigned from A.D. 337 to 360.

Thrace and Illyria. It would seem certain that this number of three statues were set up as a protection against all the tribes of the barbarians."

Olympiodorus also gives an account of an enchanted statue that at one time stood at Rhegium, the modern Reggio, on the coast of Bruttium in Sicily. It was this talisman that was supposed to have prevented Alaric's contemplated invasion of the island ¹

"This consecrated statue, standing there, prevented any crossing. It was set up indeed, as is reported, in old times to turn aside the fires of Mount Etna, and to obstruct the passage of the barbarians. Upon one foot burned an eternal fire, upon the other stood never-failing water. When therefore this statue was at length broken in pieces disaster came upon Sicily both from the fire of Etna and from the barbarians. Indeed the statue was overthrown by Asclepius, who was the superintendent of the estates of Constantius and Placidia, in Sicily "

The origin of one of the most celebrated tutelary statues of antiquity or rather groups of statuary, the Abaton of Rhodes, is most unusual in that it was designed to be a memorial of the disgrace of the people who in later times came to regard it as their palladium. Vitruvius relates that the Rhodians had made an entirely unprovoked attack upon Halicarnassus, the capital of Artemisia, Queen of Caria and the widow of Mausolus. But her vengeance was complete and humiliating. By strategy she worsted the Rhodian fleet and then attacked the city. When it fell and to perpetuate the memory of her victory she set up in the city two brazen statues, one of which was made in her own likeness and represented her as impressing the stigmata of servitude upon the forehead of the second figure typifying Rhodes. Naturally enough the inhabitants of the conquered city were far from pleased with this perpetual reminder of their disgrace. Since, however, it was contrary to their religious beliefs to remove any trophy, however offensive, they set up about it the walls of a sanctuary, or Abaton, and roofed it in, ostensibly to protect it and to secure it from violation, but actually to hide it. And in the course of time and after they had freed themselves, this statue, at

¹ *Olympiodori Thebæi Fragmenta—Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, edit. Carl Müller, 1851, vol. iv, p. 60, § 15

one time the Rhodians' shame, came to be regarded by them as their greatest glory.¹

The capital of the Eastern Empire and its rulers had learned by bitter experience that their exposed situation upon the very frontiers of Christendom was no enviable one. Nature had made the position of that city strong and all the craft of the engineer was called upon to make it even stronger. Nor did her people neglect the arts of magic to render her impregnable or to warn her of any hostile demonstration planned against her in the mysterious east. At one time the city must have been crowded with statues, which in popular estimation were held to be endowed with tutelary powers or which were believed to represent the gods of strange peoples, the overthrow of which on the first signs of hostility would on the instant do their potential enemies incalculable harm. The *Annals* of Giovanni Zonara are crowded with references to these palladia. One or two of his anecdotes are worth recounting for the light they throw upon contemporary beliefs. During the reign of the Emperor Theophylus three of his lieutenants rebelled against him. Whereupon the Emperor took counsel of the patriarch John, who would seem to have been drawn, like many another ecclesiastic before and after him, to the study and practice of the Black Art. The patriarch drew his august master's attention to a three-headed statue that stood in the Euripus of the Circus. He, moreover, counselled him to have three brazen hammers made, to give one to each of three strong men, and to send them at midnight to the Circus, there to knock off the heads of the statue. No sooner said than done. Two of the heads fell, but the third, despite repeated blows was only bent upon the brazen neck. The result, however, was all that could be wished for; and within a short while the Emperor was gratified by the news that two of his rebellious lieutenants had been slain in battle, while the third was so sorely wounded that he would never again be able to bear arms against him.

Over the arch of the Xerolophe there stood in the reign of the Emperor Romanus I, surnamed Lecapenus, a statue of Simeon, Duke of Bulgaria. Now the Bulgars, and Duke Simeon in particular, had long been thorns in the side of the Emperor. He, like his predecessor, had counsellors

¹ Vitruvius, *Bk. II*, cp. *viii*, 15.

well versed in the Black Art, and they advised him to knock the head off this statue, after which maltreatment of his presentment Simeon would surely die. The Emperor did as suggested, whereupon Simeon straightway died, but not by the loss of his head, as we should have every right to expect, but of a pain in his stomach, a circumstance which adds an air of verisimilitude to this otherwise unconvincing anecdote.

Similar experiments carried out by the Empress Euphrosyne, wife of the Emperor Alexis Angelus, produced equally excellent results. One, however, that was a distinct failure was carried out upon a gigantic statue of Minerva that stood at the close of the twelfth century upon a pillar in the city. This figure was popularly believed to have been set up to draw on the Latins of the West. And it was accordingly taken down and broken in pieces. Nevertheless the Latins advanced upon Byzantium and took the city in 1204.

A perfect orgy of destruction followed the fall of the city and the murder of the Emperor Alexis Ducas. Inspired principally by a desire for spoil, this frenzy may nevertheless have been fed to some extent by fear of these talismans. Nicetas records that "the Latins determined to throw downe the renowned Statues called *Staechnodes* (because of the iust proportion and simmetrie of all their parts) being accounted the forts and fences of Constantinople, and inuented to serue for a rampier against the enemies that would enter into it by force, or surprise I know not if with reason and truth, or no; aboue all they resolved to throw doune those that were contrarie to their Nation."¹ Of these the most important was the bronze equestrian statue, presumably of an early emperor, that was believed by some to represent Bellerophon upon Pegasus and by others "Jesus the son of Navis," Joshua, the son of Nun. In smashing up this figure the left fore-foot of the horse was broken off and in the fracture the western vandals detected as they thought the image of a Bulgarian. Hoof and portrait were promptly melted down that thereby any hostile demonstration by the Bulgars might be prevented.

Until the disastrous flood of 1333, which swept away the old Ponte Vecchio over the Arno, at Florence, the lower half

¹ Nicetas *Annales*, edit Migne, Tom 139, § 848-849 I use the translation of Peter Camerarius *The Walking Librarian*, p 216.

of a statue of Mars, popularly believed to be the palladium of the City, stood upon a pillar in the centre of the bridge. The only people who seem to have had any doubt of the awful character of this relic were certain small boys of the city, who, according to Boccaccio da Certaldo, threw mud and stones at it. It is, however, to be presumed that the fact that of two of these same boys, when they grew to man's estate, one was drowned in the Arno and the other was hanged, induced others to treat the statue with more respect.

According to local legend, in pagan times Florence had been under the protection of Mars whose equestrian statue had stood in a temple on the site of the present Baptistry. When in later times the city became Christian, John the Baptist ousted the pagan God, but the good citizens, being in some doubt as to the possible consequences of this dispossession—Mars, of course, was transmuted into a demon by this change of belief—decided to put him upon a tower near the Arno. With the Baptist at one end of the City and Mars at the other they felt reasonably safe. When Attila, or rather Totila, for Attila never crossed the Apennines, destroyed the city, the statue fell into the river—one wonders how the Florentines squared this disaster with their beliefs—whence the lower half of it was recovered three hundred years later when Charlemagne rebuilt the city, and it was set up upon the bridge.¹

There is, of course, no justification for any incident in the story except the circumstance that the statue stood upon the bridge and was regarded with veneration and even terror by the citizens.

The concept of a national palladium, is not Hellenic but typically Asiatic despite the circumstance that the greater number of which anything is recorded is Hellenic. Hence it was that when the Arabs had over-run half the Mediterranean basin the concept of magic statues as palladia or talismans spread like wildfire.

Among the marvels of combined magical and mechanical ingenuity with which the mediæval miracle-mongers credited the Mage Virgilus, one of the most amazing was the *Salvatio Romæ*, a series of figures each representing the tutelary deity of one of the tribes or peoples with which Rome had come into contact or had conquered. Each

¹ L. G. Blanc *Saggio di una interpretazione, etc*—*L'Inferno*, 1865.

figure held a bell in one hand, and the whole series was set up upon the roof of the Capitol at Rome surrounding a central statue representing the deity of Rome. Whenever one of the nations represented contemplated rebellion or meditated an attack upon Rome the figure of its particular god turned its back upon the central statue and began to ring the bell which it held. Warned thereby of impending trouble the Roman legions marched into the territory of the people concerned and put down the rising before it had time to spread. Very naturally this cunning device proved far from popular with the peoples over which Rome held sway, and in the end the Carthaginians, by a clever ruse, and an appeal to the cupidity of the city fathers, managed to undermine the Capitol and bring the building and its statues down in ruin. It is to be feared that when the Carthaginians were planning this attack something must have gone wrong with the works of the figure of their god.

Mr Krappe is tempted to describe this imaginary talisman as typically Italian in conception.¹ Its ultimate origin would appear rather to be Oriental. A talisman of this type surmounted the dome of the Bab-adh-Dhahab, or the Golden Gate, the great palace that the Khalif Mansur, the father of Haroun al Raschid, built for himself within the cyclopean walls of the Round City of Baghdad. On the summit of the green cupola, whence the palace obtained its alternative title of the Palace of the Green Dome—Al-Kubbat-al-Khadra—one hundred and twenty feet above the pavement and visible from every quarter of the city, was perched the brazen figure of a horseman lance in hand, which later ages credited with the magic property of pointing with its lance to the direction whence the enemies of the Khalif were about to attack. Khatib in 1038 is the first to mention this figure and its magic property.² Yâkût, who produced his great *Geographical Dictionary*, the *Mu'jam-al-Buldan*, towards the close of the reign of the Khalif Nasir, about 1226, repeats Khatib's legend, but pours scorn upon the earlier author for repeating fables only "worthy of Balinas," the credulous Apollonius of Tyana.³ It is not often

¹ Haggerty Krappe *The Science of Folklore*, p. 126.

² Manuscript. *History of Baghdad*, quoted by G. Le Strange *Baghdad* 1900,

p. 31n

³ Yâkût *Geographical Dictionary*, edited by F. Wustenfeld 1866, vol. 1, p. 683

that Yâkût, who is himself somewhat prone to accept and disseminate the marvellous, displays so much common sense.

At the other extremity of the Arab empire a second brazen horseman, endowed with the same miraculous power, watched over the destiny of the Moorish kingdom of Granada.¹ Until the close of the fifteenth century this talisman stood upon the tower of the royal palace that crowned the Hill of the Albaycin—La Casa del Gallo de Viento, the House of the Weathercock. Sîdî Hasan saw its removal in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella during some repair to the palace. "I saw it with my own eyes; it was of a heptagonal shape, and had the following inscription in verse—

"The palace at fair Granada presents a talisman.
The horseman, though a solid body, turns with every
wind.
This to a wise man reveals a mystery.
In a little while comes calamity to ruin both the palace
and its owner"

Tradition very naturally improved upon fact. The Christian historian, Marmol, asserts that the Sultan of Granada, Badîs Aben Habus, set up the weathercock to be a perpetual reminder of the instability of the Moorish power, and that the verse ran,

"Thus Ibn Habus al Badîse predicts Andaluz shall one
day vanish and pass away."

Another version of the legend identifies Aben Habuz with a captain of the army of Tarîk, who was left by the conqueror as Alcayde of Granada, and gives the verse as,

"Calet el Bedîcî Aben Habuz
Quîdat ehahet Lindabuz."

"In this way, says Aben Habuz the wise,
Andaluz guards against surprise."

These mechanical figures, whatever their original purpose, were not the only objects that the Oriental mind regarded

¹ Washington Irving *The Alhambra—The House of the Weathercock.*

with deep awe, convinced that any interference with them would not only lead to disaster but would in all likelihood, precipitate it. Both Ktesias and Ælian¹ relate that Xerxes, the son of Darius, previous to his invasion of Greece, broke into the Tower of Belus, wherein in a sarcophagus of crystal only partially filled with oil lay the corpse of the founder of the City of Babylon. Beside it stood a slender column whereon was carved the warning that unless the violator of the tomb could fill the sarcophagus full of oil his affairs stood upon a most unsure footing. Xerxes, terrified, ordered the casket to be filled, but as fast as the oil poured in so it vanished away. And the truth of the augury was proved by the disastrous event of his expedition. A somewhat similar adventure befell the Chinese tyrant, Tain Schi-Huand, when he violated the tomb of Confucius. And Firdausi, in the tenth century, relates that the Sasanid despot, Hormuzd IV., who reigned in Persia in the second half of the sixth century, was warned of his fate by a revelation of a kindred nature.²

Bahram, one of the nobles of Hormuzd's Court, had fallen into disgrace and been thrown into prison. Thence he besought an audience with the tyrant asserting that he had something of the utmost importance to communicate. At the interview he told Hormuzd that in the royal treasury he had seen a plain black box, within which was a casket containing a scroll of white satin with writing in the Persian language inscribed by the King's father, Nouschirwan. Upon this scroll depended the fate of the Iranians. When the casket was opened Hormuzd discovered to his dismay that the scroll was a prophecy that after reigning twelve years Hormuzd's name should be forgotten and that enemies should surround him upon all sides, one of whom should burn out the King's eyes and then slay him.

In the circumstances Bahram can scarcely have been surprised when he was promptly sent back to his cell, where the following night the executioner paid him a professional visit.

¹ Ktesias *Persica*, 21, Ælian *Var Hist*, xiii, 3.

² *Schah Nameh of Firdausi*, Bk. xliii—translation by Jules Mohl, 1877, tom vi, p. 45 *et seq.* To all intents the same story is told by the eleventh century Persian historian, Al-Tha'âlibî (H. Zotenberg *Histoire des rois de Perses—Abû Mansûr Abd al-Malik Ibn Mohammed Ibn Isma'îl Al-Tha'âlibî*, 1900, p. 639). *Bulletin Hispanique*, vol. xxx, pp. 182-184.

These two oriental concepts were continued in the legend of the palladium of the Visi-Gothic kingdom of Spain—a great tower upreared by Hercules, the reputed founder of Toledo, in the mountains to the east of the city. Beneath it hewn out of the living rock was a secret chamber within which and watched through the centuries by generations of hereditary guardians the fate of the kingdom lay concealed. Each succeeding king of Spain had placed a fresh lock upon the door of the chamber, for revelation of the secret, so said tradition, entailed disaster for the monarch who had the hardihood to pass the threshold.

“Bethink, yon spell-bound portal would afford
Never to former monarch entrance-way;
Nor shall it ever ope, old records say,
Save to a king, the last of all his line,
What time his empire totters to decay,
And treason digs, beneath, her fatal mine,
And, high above, impends avenging wrath divine”
(Walter Scott *The Vision of Don Roderick*, II, XI)

One fatal day the two aged custodians of the secret came to Don Roderic, last of the Gothic kings, to urge him to carry out the neglected rite. At his crowning he had offered up a diadem in the Cathedral of the city, but had not placed his lock upon the door. Curiosity was, however, Roderic's besetting sin. Leaning from the Palace windows he had seen the lovely Florinda, daughter of Count Julian, governor of Ceuta, in her bath, which stood upon the bank of the Tagus. The glimpse he then had of her shapely leg had stirred his curiosity. The conclusion was foregone. And it made a deadly enemy of the Count. Again the fatal craving of the king got the better of him and he rode out of Toledo not to remedy his omission but to see what lay within the guarded chamber. The history of his visit is chronicled with much circumstance in the *Historia Verdadeyra del Don Rodrigo*, professedly a translation from the Arabic of the Alcaýde Abulcacim Tarif Abentarque. There is, of course, no Arabic original, the author being the “translator,” Miguel de Luna. I have made use here of Sir Walter Scott's translation.

“About a mile from Toledo between steep rocks that lie East of that great City there was formerly a very ancient

and very magnificent structure, tho a little endamaged by Time, that consumes all: four estadoes (i.e. four times a man's height) below it, there was a cave with a very narrow entrance, and a gate cut out of the solid rock, lined with a strong covering of iron, and fastened with many locks; above the gate some Greek letters are engraved, which, although abbreviated, and of doubtful meaning, were thus interpreted, according to the exposition of learned men:—"The King who opens this cave, and can discover the wonders, will discover both good and evil things." Many kings desired to know the mystery of this tower, and sought to find out the manner with much care; but when they opened the gate, such a tremendous noise arose in the cave that it appeared as if the earth was bursting; many of those present sickened with fear, and others lost their lives. In order to prevent such great perils (as they supposed a dangerous enchantment was contained within), they secured the gate with new locks, concluding that, though a king was destined to open it, the fated time was not yet arrived. At last King Don Rodrigo, led on by his evil fortune and unlucky destiny, opened the tower; and some bold attendants, whom he had brought with him, entered, although agitated with fear. Having proceeded a good way, they fled back to the entrance, terrified with a frightful vision which they had beheld. The king was greatly moved, and ordered many torches, so contrived that the tempest in the cave could not extinguish them, to be lighted. Then the King entered, not without fear, before all the others. They discovered, by degrees, a splendid hall, apparently built in a very sumptuous manner; in the middle stood a Bronze Statue of very ferocious appearance, which held a battle-axe in its hands. With this he struck the floor violently, giving it such heavy blows that the noise in the cave was occasioned by the motion of the air. The king, greatly affrighted and astonished, began to conjure this terrible vision, promising that he would return without doing any injury in the cave, after he had obtained a sight of what was contained in it. The statue ceased to strike the floor, and the king, with his followers, somewhat assured, and recovering their courage, proceeded into the hall; and to the right hand of the statue they found this inscription

on the wall, "Unhappy king, thou hast entered here in evil hour." To the left hand on the wall these words were inscribed, "By a strange people shalt thou be dispossessed, [and thy subjects foully degraded.]" On the shoulders of the statue other words were written, which said, "I call upon the sons of Hagar." And upon his breast was written, "I do mine office." At the entrance of the hall there was placed a round bowl, from which a great noise, like the fall of waters, proceeded. They found no other thing in the hall: and when the king, sorrowful and greatly affected, had scarcely turned about to leave the cavern, the statue again commenced its accustomed blows upon the floor. After they had mutually promised to conceal what they had seen, they again closed the tower, and blocked up the gate of the cavern with earth, that no memory might remain in the world of such a portentous and evil-boding prodigy. The ensuing midnight they heard great cries and clamour from the cave, resounding like the noise of battle, and the ground shaking with a tremendous roar, the whole edifice of the old tower fell to the ground, by which they were greatly affrighted, the vision which they had beheld appearing to them as a dream.

"The king having left the tower, ordered wise men to explain what the inscriptions signified; and having consulted upon and studied their meaning, they declared that the statue of bronze, with the motion which it made with its battle-axe, signified Time; and that its office, alluded to in the inscription on its breast, was, that he never rests a single moment. The words on the shoulders, "I call upon the sons of Hagar," they expounded, that, in time, Spain would be conquered by the Arabs. The words upon the left wall signified the destruction of King Rodrigo; those on the right, the dreadful calamities which were to fall upon the Spaniards and Goths, and that the unfortunate king would be dispossessed of all his states. Finally, the letters on the portal indicated that good would betide to the conquerors, and evil to the conquered, of which experience proved the truth."

Another version of the story relates that when on the following day the king returned to the Tower an eagle suddenly appeared in the zenith carrying in its beak a

flaming torch which it let fall upon the Tower. Instantly the age-old structure burst into flames and was consumed. And every man upon whom the ashes of the conflagration fell died in the wars that followed the Moorish invasion.

These highly-coloured recensions of the original legend afford interesting and instructive examples of the growth of such tales in the course of the years or centuries. Apparently the earliest version of the story is to be found in a manuscript of Ibn Habib, a Moorish writer of the ninth century, preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The authority for his story was one Abdala ben Uahab, who in his turn followed a certain Alaits ben Caad.¹ Ibn Habib relates that after Muza ben Nosur entered Toledo, the gates of which the Jews, who still remembered the persecutions of Sisebert and Egica, had thrown open to one-eyed Tarik, he first entered the House of the Kings, the *aula regia*, wherein he found the twenty-five gem-set votive crowns of the Visi-Gothic monarchs.

"Beside this house where were the crowns, stood another with twenty-four locks,² by reason that every time that a monarch began his reign, he placed one there, as his predecessors had done up to the time that Roderic occupied the throne, under whom Spain was conquered. A few days before the conquest Roderic said: By God, I will not die with this house closed against me; I will open it at once to learn what is within. The Christian priests and bishops united together to say to him: Why do you intend to open this house? Take from us what you hope to find there; but do not do what has never been done by any of your predecessors, who were wise men and prudent in acting thus. But Roderic insisted upon opening it, urged on by his fatal destiny; and there he found a wooden coffer and within it some figures of Arabs with turbans, Arab bows and swords chiselled and richly ornamented. There was found also within this house a writing which said: When someone shall open this house and shall enter it, the peoples resembling those which are here

¹ Bodleian MS No 127, pp 145-146, quoted by Juan Menéndez Pidal *La Cueva de Hércules—Revista de Archivos* vol. xiv (1901), pp 861-862, and by Alexander Haggerty Krappe *La Legende de la Maison Fermée de Toledo—Bulletin Hispanique*, vol xxvi, pp 305 311

² Leonard Williams (*The Arts and Crafts of Older Spain*, vol 1, pp 32, 33), confuses these two buildings in his extracts from Ibn Alwardi:

represented shall invade this country, shall seize it and shall conquer it. That year took place the descent of the Moslems."

Almost the same story is told by Ibn Khordâbah, the author of the *Book of the Roads and Realms* written between 844 and 848, but he asserts that Roderic broke open the house in search of treasure, as is hinted by Ibn Habib. He also says nothing of the wooden coffer.

Thereafter others followed, each adding some small circumstance or distorting the words of his predecessors. It is, however, obvious that de Luna's principal authority was Ludovicus Nonnius' *Hispania*, in which the account given is said to be that of Roderic, Archbishop of Toledo, who was contemporary with the events described.¹

"Without the walls [of Toledo] towards the east there may be seen the scattered remains of an one-time huge theatre. Roderick, Archbishop of Toledo before the invasion of Spain by the Arabs, is the authority for the statement that this was the Fateful Palace; that unconquerable bars of iron secured its everlasting portals lest their opening should bring disaster upon Spain; and that in these calamities not the vulgar alone but even the most experienced believed. But into the mind of Roderick last of the Gothic kings entered fatal curiosity that he might know what was to be seen behind the forbidden doors; for there it was believed the wealth and secret treasures of the kings of old time were preserved. Despite the unwillingness of all, he ordered that the bolts and bars should be broken; but nothing more than a chest was found and in it a canvas in which when unrolled appeared the new and unknown faces and vesture of men with the Latin inscription *Hispaniae excidium ab illa gente imminere* [From that race threatens the overthrow of Spain]; they were the faces and the dresses of the Moors. From this the king and others were convinced that a great disaster was impending from Africa; nor was this belief false as the chronicles of Spain even to this day lament."

¹ *Ludovici Nonni Hispania*, 1608, cp. LIX, p. 435.

CHAPTER III

RELICS AND TREASURE TROVE

"Les reliques sunt forz, Deus i fait grant vertuz "

Roman de Charlemagne, 192

"Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, insere te officiis nostris
et haec vascula arte fabricata gentium, sublimitatis tuae
potentia ita emundare digneris, ut, omni immunditia
deposita, sint fidelibus tuis tempore pacis atque tran-
quillitatis utenda Per Christum Dominum nostrum, etc "

*Oratio super vasa in loco antiquo reperta.*¹

AN important alliance, and one which had a strong influence upon the character of some mediaeval talismans, is that between Teutonic myths and the beliefs that in the Middle Ages gathered about relics

The attributes and supernatural qualities which an earlier and heathen era ascribed to the gifts of the dwarfs and elves and to the ensigns of the gods and demi-gods, were transferred by a later and Christian era to the relics of the saints and martyrs of the Church, and to other objects for which an even more marvellous history was claimed. The miraculous fecundity of the cup of Jamshid and of the horns of Odin and of the Wendish four-headed god Svantovit in Rügen, which, according to Saxo Grammaticus, ran wine for ever, transferred itself to the Holy Grail The talismanic character of the spears of Indra and of Odin was transferred to the Sacred Spears of Longinus, of Constantine, and of St. George.

¹ A Le Prévost—"Mémoire sur la collection des vases antiques trouvés en Mars 1830 à Berthouville"—*Mémoires de la Soc des Antiq de Normandie*, tom vi, 1832

I am aware that there is no justification for the implied interpretation of *gentium*—"of the heathen"—by "of the gentle people" or fairies But this transgression must be condoned, for the sake of the appositeness of the prayer

The first active property to be attributed to the relics of saints during the Middle Ages was that of healing. At first their tombs and then everything that had come in direct contact with their bones, or any object believed to have been intimately associated with them during life was credited with this power, even the water poured over their bones, shreds of their garments, splinters of the ships in which they had voyaged, and the earth in which they had lain were credited with this virtue.¹ Subsequently, and by an inevitable extension, relics were not only credited with the property of healing but were believed to bring peace and fruitfulness to their owners and, like the jewels of the elves and dwarfs, more material forms of fortune—"ubicunque hae reliquiae fuerint, illic pax et augmentum et lenitas aeris semper erit."²

The very nature of a relic endowed it with certain tutelary powers over the individual fortunate enough to become possessed of it. And to such lengths was this belief in the potency, both talismanic and amuletic, of the objects carried, that in the fourteenth century, according to one authority, the Earls of Ross never went into battle without putting on over their armour in the manner of a surcoat the Shirt of St. Duthac, which at ordinary times was hung in St. Duthac's church at Tain.³ This may be so; but it is a generalization quite unwarranted by the existing evidence. On one occasion only is the relic known to have been so worn; and then it did not justify the great trust imposed in it. At the disastrous battle of Haldon Hill, near Berwick,

¹ Bede III, 9 (St Oswald), III, 11 and 13, IV, 3 (St Cladda), and IV, 61 (Eaconwald).

² Pertz I, 71

³ *Proc Soc Antiq of Scotland*, vol XII, p 135 n St Duthac, Duthace or Duthoch was Bishop of Ross from 1240 to 1253. His "day" is March 8th

A further instance of the protective quality of such holy garments is afforded by the Shirt of St Margaret of Scotland, at one time preserved close by her shrine at Dunfermline. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this was worn by the Queens of Scotland in travail in the belief that by so doing the pains would be mitigated (*Inventories of Mary Queen of Scots*, p xiv). The balsamic quality of this celebrated garment may be traced to very primitive tree-worship. As Frazer points out it is believed among the south Slavonians that if a barren woman desires to have a child she drapes a new chemise upon a fruitful tree on the eve of St George's Day, and if on the following morning before sunrise she finds some living creature has crept upon the garment, she puts it on believing that before the year is out her wish will be fulfilled. (*The Magic Art*, vol II, pp 56-58) It is only a short step from the garment of the tree-god to the robe of a saint.

fought on July 12th, 1333, Hugh, fourth Earl of Ross, commanded the Scottish reserves, which he led prematurely against the right wing of the English army ranked under the banner of Baliol. Ross's forces were driven back and the Earl himself slain. When after the battle his body was found by the English it was still enveloped in the tattered remains of St. Duthac's Shirt, until then believed to render its wearer invulnerable. Being themselves somewhat addicted to a belief in talismans of this nature, the conquerors were only too delighted to discover evidence of the feeble nature of the Scottish palladia, and promptly sent the blood-stained garment back to Tain with derisive comments on the impotence of the Saint. From Tain, the Shirt—so says Bain—its reputation shattered, shortly afterwards disappeared.¹

The incident affords an interesting example of the poetic justice so beloved of the mediaeval mind, though I am unaware of any contemporary chronicler who has pointed this out. Hugh himself is not recorded to have sinned against the Saint, but his father, William the third Earl, transgressed grievously when in 1306 he violated the sanctuary at Tain and took thence Bruce's Queen and daughter whom he handed over to Edward I. Such an action merited the Saint's sternest displeasure, but it seems somewhat unfair that his anger should have been vented upon the innocent son. Nor does it speak well of the Saint as a Scottish patriot.

Of what primitive belief the amuletic quality of St. Duthac's shirt is a manifestation I do not know. Nor am I aware of any other relic of this nature for which such claims have been made. But it is not improbable that the belief is intimately connected with another one to the effect that the wearing of a shirt of which the material has been spun, woven and sewn by an absolutely chaste maiden upon Christmas day will render the wearer proof against both lead and steel.²

¹ F. N. Reid *The Earls of Ross*, p. 3, *The Scotts Peerage*, edit. Sir James Balfour Paul, 1910, vol. VII, p. 236, Robert Bain *History of the Ancient Province of Ross*, 1899, p. 69. I cannot agree with Bain that the Shirt of St. Duthac disappeared shortly after 1333. The Saint's cabor, or crozier, was still at Tain early in the sixteenth century (See *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland* under date 12th September, 1506).

² Bernhard Ragner *Legends and Customs of Christmas*—Chicago Tribune, Christmas Number, 1925. This would appear to be a variant of the Teutonic

Probably the most celebrated of such relic talismans is the Cathach of Columb-Cille, better known as St. Columba, that for more than a thousand years has been the palladium and the victory-bringer of the great Irish family of O'Donnell. The best account of its romantic history is to be found in the somewhat dry pages of John T. Gilbert's *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Ireland* published in 1879.

The traditional account of the origin of the Cathach, if we are prepared to accept it as substantially accurate, throws a somewhat startling light upon the character of the Saint whose name it bears. According to tradition—and here at least we are on safe ground—Columba when a young man, and despite his princely birth, for he was fourth in descent from the great Niall of the Nine Hostages and was, moreover, kinsman to Diarmait, King of all Ireland, was addicted to the study of the scriptures. On one occasion he visited his old instructor St. Finnian at Clonard and from him borrowed a copy of the Psalms. This he transcribed, and then, with an honesty which might be copied with advantage by many students to-day, he returned the manuscript to its owner. St. Finnian, however, learned that his former pupil had made the copy and asked angrily that this should be handed over to him, though it is difficult to see on what grounds the demand was based. Presumably any copyright in the Psalms had long lapsed, and in any case they were not likely to have been vested in an Irish pedagogue however learned and holy. Columba naturally objected and appealed to Diarmait, convinced that if common sense did not prevail with the king his cousinhood certainly would. Unfortunately for everyone concerned, neither of these reasons had weight with Diarmait. He went for advice to St. Ciaran, who was also a friend of Columba, and this Solomon, who was apparently somewhat prone to wrapping up his pronouncements in rather obscure language answered that “to every cow belongs her own calf,” and Columba's manuscript, being the calf of St. Finnian's Psalter, was therefore held to be St. Finnian's by right. Columba, however, still refused to give up what he

washing cloth which had to be spun in silence, or the hemp for it picked, braked, hatchelled, spun and woven all in one day (Grimm *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. II, p. 871.) For the *waistcoat of proof* worn by Claverhouse see Reginald Scott's *Discoveries of Witchcraft* 1665, p. 231.

considered to be his own property, and flinging the words, "'Tis an unjust decision, O Diarmait, and I will be avenged," at the indignant king, went off in dudgeon to nurse his grievance.

Not long after a small matter of homicide during the games at Tara, no great thing in those days, brought Curnan, son of the King of Connaught to Columba seeking sanctuary. Diarmait, whose servant had provided the *corpus delicti*, snatched the young man from sanctuary and promptly shortened him. Here was the future Saint's opportunity for revenge, though he nearly spoilt everything by going to Diarmait at Tara and telling him in most unmeasured language what he thought of him and his sacrilegious practices. Thereafter he fled hot foot for his native county of Tirconnell where he roused his kinsmen and the O'Donnells, in general bitter enemies, but now reconciled at the prospect of a little rapine in company. Marching together they met Diarmait's army at Cuil-dremhne not far from Drumcliff, in Sligo, and defeated it with great slaughter, while Columba, a holy man and a prospective Saint, stood aside from the actual carnage but, like Moses, held up his hands praying for victory over his enemies. Having achieved his revenge, the inevitable reaction set in, and what with the sharp pricking of his conscience and the opprobrium which his conduct had brought him, he passed a most unhappy time until at last on the advice of St. Molaise he exiled himself to Iona where he died in 597.

Meanwhile the copy of the Psalms, the fount and origin of all the trouble, remained in the hands of the O'Donnells, who came to regard it as a most potent talisman, a belief that was strengthened by the advice, so it is said, of St. Caillin¹ of Fenagh who told them that they must never let it fall into the hands of an enemy, nor must anyone, even an O'Donnell, open the case in which it was kept. Should they fail in this, death and disaster would come upon them. And history would seem to warrant the belief that they most scrupulously obeyed the Saint's injunctions. In 1497, however, it fell into the hands of the M'Dermotts, but was regained by the O'Donnells two years later. And in 1567

¹ It was St. Caillin who bestowed upon the Conmaiche their cathach or talisman of a "hazel cross."

its custodier, MacRobartaigh, was killed and the Cathach itself nearly fell into the hands of Shane O'Neill in a skirmish between the forces of Aedh Dubh—Black Hugh—O'Donnell, "the Achilles of the Gaels of Erin," elder brother to Manus O'Donnell, and the vanguard of Shane's army.

Early in the seventeenth century, although the conditions laid down by St. Caillin had been strictly obeyed, disaster came upon the sept. Red Hugh O'Donnell, the last chief to be inaugurated upon the Stone of Duone at Kilmacrenan, died in 1602 an exile at Simancas, poisoned by James Blake, of Galway, an agent we much regret to say of Sir George Carew. His brother Rory, Earl of Tirconnell, died an exile in Italy in 1608. The one was unmarried; the other left a son whose offspring were daughters only.

Meanwhile the Cathach, we learn from Colgan, author of the *Trias Thaumaturga*, writing in 1647, was hidden somewhere in Donegal, whence the O'Donnells had sprung. We may suspect, with good reason to believe we are right, that its guardian at this time was Terence or Turlough O'Donnell, for it next appears in the hands of the latter's son, Daniel O'Donnell (1666-1735), major-general in the service of the Sun King. After the Peace of Limerick Daniel went to France and obtained a commission in the Regiment de la Marine. With him, so it is said, though we may beg leave to doubt it, it journeyed through France, Germany, the Low Countries and Italy, and appeared in battles and leaguers so many that a list of them would be as long and as wearisome as an Irish pedigree. When in 1723 Daniel hung up his sword for good he placed the relic in a new silver case and handed it over to the care of a Belgian monastery, with instructions that if any O'Donnell could prove his right to it as head of the family, it was to be surrendered to him. Finally, in 1802, an Irish abbot gave it up to Sir Neale O'Donnell, Bart., of Newport, in county Mayo, and in the possession of this family it has remained ever since, though it still continued to be a source of strife. In 1814 Sir Neale's widow took action against Sir William Betham, Ulster King at Arms, for indulging his curiosity and opening the case without her permission. At present it reposes in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy at Dublin to which institution it has been lent by the O'Donnells of Newport.

The practice of making heirlooms of historic swords and other intimate and valuable properties was not uncommon during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Edmund, Earl of March, who died in 1381, bequeathed to his son Roger a golden cup and a horn mounted with gold, and "one sword garnished with gold which belonged to the good King Edward," with instructions that they were ever after to be handed on from father to son. And Sir Stephen Scrope of Bentley, son of Richard Lord Scrope of Bolton, in 1405 left his son Stephen "a long sword which was King Edward's and given by him to my father"¹

Neither of these weapons is known to have survived. One such, however, and one partaking of much of the character of a luck is the so-called Sword of Guy of Warwick preserved at Warwick Castle. Unfortunately it must be dated in the third quarter of the fourteenth century—it closely resembles the sword of Edward III, at Windsor—and as a consequence cannot even be attributed to the historical Earl of that name who died in 1315. But Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, by his will left "to Thomas, my son, my best coat of mail, helmet and suit of harness"; Thomas in his turn in 1369 bequeathed to his son "the coat of mail, sometime belonging to that famous Guy Warwick"; and the latter, when his time came in 1400, bequeathed this coat of mail to his son.² In none of these wills is any sword of Guy mentioned, but we may assume, probably not incorrectly, that the weapon now at Warwick is that of either Earl Thomas or his son, elevated in the fifteenth century to the rank of a relic of the fabulous Guy to accompany the shirt of mail once that of the real Earl Guy.

The actual process of the unconscious conversion of an heirloom into a family luck may perhaps be seen in the will of Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormonde, dated July 31st, 1515.³ The heirloom was a "lytle whyte horne of ivory, garnished at both thendes with gold, and corse thereunto of whyte sylke, barred with barres of gold, and a tyret of golde thereupon, which was myn auncetours at fyrst time they

¹ Nicolas *Testamenta Vetusta*, vol 1, pp 74, 111 and 168

² Nicolas *Testamenta Vetusta*, vol 1, pp 54, 79 and 154. The redoubtable Guy's gigantic porridge pot and meat fork are probably relics of the splendid hospitality of the King Maker who fed daily an almost incredible number of retainers and dependants

³ *Archæologia*, vol III, pp 20-21.

were called to honour, and hath sythen contynually remained in the same blode, for wych cause my seid lord and father commanded me upon his blessing, that I shuld doo my devoir to cause it to contynue still in my blode as far furth as that myght lye in me soo to be doone to the honor of the same blode."

With this laudable object in view and having no son of his own to whom to leave it he bequeathed this ancestral horn to his grandson, Sir Thomas Bullen, Earl of Wiltshire, the father of the ill-fated Anne, and to Sir Thomas' male heirs. Failing them the Earl stipulated that it should pass to Sir George St Leger, son of his daughter, Anne, and Sir James St Leger, ancestor of the St. Legers of Eggesford, in Devonshire, and his male heirs.

The subsequent history of the horn, whether as old as the early fourteenth century as the Earl believed or of the fifteenth century as the description of the corse or baldric would seem to suggest,¹ is unknown.² It cannot have passed to the Earl of Wiltshire's son, George, Viscount Rochford, since the latter was beheaded before the death of his father in 1539. Rochford, though generally said to have died childless, apparently left one son, George Bulleyn (d. 1603), Dean of Lichfield, but he is scarcely likely to have inherited any of his grandfather's property for the Bulleyns suffered constant persecution and spoliation at the hands of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, and Rochford's large estates passed to the Crown on his execution.

That the universal interest in the relics of the early saints and martyrs had a marked influence on the development of the mediaeval talisman is unquestionable. Relic hunting was a pastime that is to-day only comparable with the collecting of Old Masters, furniture and old silver. A second mediaeval pastime may also have had some influence upon the development of the cult of the talisman.

"Barrow digging" and "cross digging," the search for buried treasure beneath funeral mounds, in the ruins of the Roman towns of Uriconium and Corstopitum, at the feet of wayside crosses, and in other, to the mediaeval mind,

¹ Compare the arrangement of its attachments with those on the Boarstall Tutbury and Hooton Horns (hist p 74)

²The Earl of Wiltshire was at one time Keeper of the Parks of Beskwood and Thundersley

likely spots was a popular and frequently very remunerative pastime of both the peasantry and even those of more exalted station. King John himself superintended a treasure hunt at Corbridge, the Roman Corstopitum, in Northumberland, in 1201. And it was an order from Henry III. that his brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall, should dig up all the barrows in his earldom and hand over the expected proceeds to the royal treasury that led to the violent quarrel between the brothers chronicled by Matthew Paris.

Treasure hunting, however, by those of humble station and without the royal licence—"the King's plackard" as it was later termed—was attempted felony and liable to be followed by severe punishment.

Some excuse, reasonable to mediaeval thought, had to be produced to account for the possession of the proceeds of such an unlicensed hunt should the busybody officers of the Crown make enquiry. And if not actually invented for the purpose the story associated with the barrow known as Willey Howe would afford an admirable excuse.

At the side of the road from North Burton to Wold Newton, near Bridlington, in the East Riding of Yorkshire is a barrow of unusual size, known locally as Willey Howe. This spot is credited with having been in the past the scene of numerous fairy manifestations. And it maintained this reputation certainly as late as the middle of the seventeenth century. John Webster in *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*, published in 1677, gives a brief account of the trial—at which he was present—of a man accused of practising white magic.¹ The prisoner was said to have obtained a white powder from the occupants of a fairy hill, which hill would appear to have been Willey Howe.

The twelfth century chronicler, Little William of Newburgh, who was a native of this locality, relates² that in the reign of Henry I. a certain man of Wold Newton³ was returning home one night considerably the worse for his

¹ John Webster *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*, 1677, pp. 300-302. William Hone, in his *Table Book* (1827) records (p. 41) a typical Scandinavian tale of treasure-hunting that occurred on this spot.

² *Chronica Rerum Anglicarum*, Bk. 1, cp. 28.

³ The chronicler does not mention the places by name. He only states that the incident occurred in the district in which he was born. But the legend, replete with details, still survives locally. Murray (*Handbook for Travellers in Yorkshire*, 1874, p. 203) says that a Mr. Wright was told the story in 1857, the only variation being that the cup was of "fairy gold."

evening's potations. His road led him past Willey Howe, and when he reached the mound he was surprised to see a party of fairies holding high revel within it. One of them offered the inebriated traveller a drink, but he, instituting what was later to become an honourable custom, pouched the cup and immediately rode off. This *vasculum materiae incognitae, coloris insoliti, et formae inusitatae* was subsequently presented to King Henry as a marvellous gift. He in his turn gave it to his brother-in-law, David, King of Scots, who placed it in the Scottish Treasury. Some time later it was sent by William the Lion to Henry II, who had expressed a desire to see it. And collectors being much the same in all ages, Henry neglected to return it, taking advantage no doubt of the unfriendly relations that after 1173 existed between himself and his northern neighbour¹

The story of the cup of Willey Howe was unhesitatingly accepted at the time, and other and similar incidents were related and believed long after. And in such circumstances, I can conceive of no better way to account for the possession of an antique cup to which the holder had no obvious right; nor can I imagine a more effective method of getting rid of a prying wayfarer, who might happen late at night upon a party of barrow diggers, than to offer him a drink.

Legends of the type of that first attached to the Cup of Willey Howe and possessed of all or the greater part of its incidental features are familiar to every student of folk-lore. Such legends are limited to Germanic peoples, especially to those of Denmark, Schleswig, Mecklenburg and the Danish islands. There are probably a dozen churches in that part of Europe owning (or which in the past have owned) chalices popularly believed to be of fairy origin and to have been acquired in circumstances of the same nature. And not a few family talismans, including that of Edenhall, are said to have been obtained in this manner.

A very similar legend, but attached to a cup at a not so very distant time in the possession of the Macleods of Raasay, probably originated in this way. Tradition, however, says that Hugh Macleod was returning one day to the

¹ It is possible that this is the same fairy cup that Gervase of Tilbury (*f* 1177 to 1211) states was presented by Robert, Earl of Gloucester to his father Henry I (*Otia Imperialia—Scriptores Rerum Brunsvicensium*, edit G. W. von Leibnitz, 1707, vol 1, p 980)

Castle of Raasay when he came upon one of the elfin burghs. From within came the sounds of revelry, and, Hugh being of an inquiring mind and courageous withal, as the door stood wide he entered. He was immediately greeted with shouts of welcome—"Here's to you, Hugh," or "I drink to you, Hugh," and was pressed to join in the drinking. He was offered a cup of wine—or so it appeared to be. Wisely he cast out the liquor and then fled with the cup. Instantly he was pursued by his hosts, who let loose upon his track the fairy hound, Favann. This fearsome monster, according to Highland legend, is as big as a two-year-old stirk and of a bright green colour, with a plaited tail or one that curls like that of a pig. It is endowed with amazing speed, but while in pursuit of its quarry it only barks three times, the last bark invariably rendering the fugitive helpless from terror. Hugh MacLeod, however, managed to hide before the third bark and so escaped. Badly frightened but cup in hand he at last arrived at Raasay and there the fairy goblet remained.¹

In the majority of legends relating to cups said to have been stolen from the elves the ravisher is generally recorded to have presented his spoil to a church; and this pious action was seemingly prompted less by devotion than by a realization that unless blessed and guarded by the Church a cup so acquired would still remain the property of its aforetime supernatural owners. The early Church even went so far as to formulate a special dedicatory prayer for vessels found in heathen barrows and in other somewhat unorthodox ways.

The pseudo-history of the Cup of Raasay is of interest because it affords an excellent example of a mental habit common to all ages—that of giving an *ex post facto* explanation of some belief, practice, or monument that cannot apparently be accounted for otherwise.

I do not know of any family talisman—cup or other—to which a curse conditional upon its loss, damage, or deliberate alienation, is attached—which curse can be proved to have been placed upon it in the Middle Ages. Curses of this nature are, despite the high antiquity claimed for them, in general inventions of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, offspring of the Gothick revival. But it is possible that some are of considerable antiquity. The

¹ J. G. Campbell *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands*, 1900, E. B. Simpson *Folklore in Lowland Scotland*, 1908

famous Anathema Cup of Pembroke College, Cambridge, would seem to warrant such a belief since it bears upon its foot the inscription—*QUI ALIENAVERIT ANATHEMA SIT.*—*T. LANGTON WINTON ÆPS AULE PENBROCHIE OLIM SOCIQ HAC TASSEÅ COOPTÅ EIGĒ AULE* 1497. (He who shall alienate [this cup] may he be accursed. T[homas] Langton, Bishop of Winchester, formerly a member of Pembroke Hall gave this cup and cover 1497.)¹

Failure to comply with the demands of the fairies or trolls for the return of their stolen property was almost invariably followed by, if I may so term it, a "conditional curse," a doom threatening disaster to the thief or his descendants if the "luck" should be lost or damaged in any way. Upon rare occasions it was, however, followed by a warning that ill-luck would inevitably follow upon its retention. Nevertheless, so perverse is human nature, so proud of these tangible links with the inhabitants of the "middle world" were their possessors, that instances are recorded of the preservation of these doom-bringers with the same almost excessive care as that bestowed by more fortunate families upon their Lucks. One such, a drinking horn of exceptional size, was preserved for many generations by a family named Goelberg at Holsteingaard, in Aal parish, Hallingdal, in Norway.

The tradition attached to this horn is of the type which has become commonly associated with these thefts from the trolls. It relates that Gudbrand Goelberg, of Holsteingaard, was upon one occasion offered a drink from this horn by a mound-dweller. Taking a fancy to the cup but not liking the drink therein he upset the latter, and, horn in hand, made his speediest way home, pursued by the indignant owner and his companions. On refusing to give it up, the trolls pronounced a curse upon the robber and his posterity—"Keep it if you will; but villeins you shall be, and never without blemish upon your bodies for nine generations." And the curse would seem to have been fulfilled at least in part.

This horn and its curious associations were first noticed by Ivar Wiel about 1740 or a little later.²

¹ E. A. Jones *The Old Plate of the Cambridge Colleges*, 1910, p. xvii and 20-21.

² Thorpe *Northern Mythology*, vol. II, p. 15, Ivar Wiel "Beskrivelse over Ringerige og Hallingdals Fogden", § 145—*Topografisk Journal for Norge*, pt. xxxi (1804), pp. 179-183.

It was of the usual German-Scandinavian type of the late fifteenth century mounted in copper gilt, the mouth engraved with the names of the Three Kings of Cologne. It held about three quarts and was enriched with a crystal set in a mount. In 1845 it was sent, so says Nicolaysen, to the Bergen museum.¹

A second horn to which a curse is attached is or was preserved² in the manor house at Ljungby in Skania in Sweden. About Christmastide in the year 1490, Fru Cissela Ulftand, the Lady of Ljungby, was greatly disturbed by the trolls who were holding high revel about the Magle stone not far from the house. One of her servants, impelled by curiosity or acting on her orders, rode out to see what was happening. Arrived at the stone he found a party of trolls dancing and making merry. Immediately on his arrival a fair troll-maiden stepped forth and offered him a drinking-horn and a pipe, with the request that he would drink a health to the troll-king and blow upon the pipe. With the rudeness characteristic of the heroes of these legends he seized both these objects and setting spurs to his horse rode hell-for-leather for the house at Ljungby, where he handed the spoils over to the lady. The trolls followed hard upon his heels, and in the discussion that followed they offered future prosperity for the family if the spoils were returned or ill-luck if their demands were refused. The lady chose the latter alternative. Within three days the man died, and his horse within two, so says tradition. And as a matter of historical fact the house has twice been burned down and the family has never prospered since.

The horn is said to be made of an unknown mixture of metals mounted with brass; the pipe is fashioned of a horse's legbone.

Talismans equally accursed are not unknown in the British Isles. A cup of this kind and one that enjoys a certain celebrity, not because of any publicity that it has received at the hands of those who have dabbled in the histories, respectable, unfortunate or scandalous, of our

¹ *Norske Fornleuinger*, p. 152. I am indebted for the history of this horn to E. S. Hartland's *Science of Fairy Tales*, edit. 1925, p. 151 note.

² Thorpe *Northern Mythology*, vol. II, pp. 89-90, apparently from Afzelius: *Svenske Folkets Sago-Hafdet*.

ancient families, but rather because it is the talisman upon which Sir Walter Scott modelled his Blessed Bear of Bradwardine, is the Lyon Cup of the [Bowes-]Lyons, Earls of Strathmore. It is said to have come into their possession towards the close of the fourteenth century when John of Forteviot, surnamed the "Whyte Lyon" from his pale hair and complexion, was the lord of Glamis. Whence and how it came to them is apparently not recorded; but the general impression would seem to be that it was acquired by some piece of chicanery or act of despotic violence, appropriate to that distant period. And since then, the history of the family has been darkened by a long series of tragedies for which, so it is said, the Cup has been responsible. It has even been asserted that if the Cup should ever be parted with or lost extinction awaits the family. Certainly the reputed first owner of the Cup—and the first owner of Glamis of the Lyon family—came to a bloody and a violent end. Chamberlain of Scotland, a man of great wealth and vast property and the son-in-law of Robert II., King of Scots, he died "suddenly and unexpectedly," says Robert, Earl of Fife and Menteith, his successor in his office of Chamberlain, on November 4th, 1382, at the hands of Sir James Lindsay of Crawford, who, if we may believe the Book of Pluscarden, stabbed him when asleep in bed. Thus began a feud between the Lyons and the Lindsays that again and again broke out with tragic accompaniments during the better part of three hundred years.

This was by no means the only tragedy that has been attributed to the maleficent influence of the Cup. High rank and great possessions were of no avail in the face of a charge of sorcery and high treason, and in 1537, Janet Douglas, grand-daughter of Archibald Bell-the-Cat and mother of the then Lord of Glamis, accused of attempting the life of King James V. by witchcraft, was found guilty of these malpractices and burned on the Castle Hill at Edinburgh. Nor was this ghastly end any the less awful when her two principal accusers, her own son and William Lyon, a kinsman of her late husband whose hand she had at one time rejected, both subsequently confessed that there was no shred of foundation for their charges. The one had denounced her in fear—he was a boy of

sixteen at the time and his mother was believed to have poisoned his father—while the other had done so for revenge.

There are even some who assert that the strange, uncanny happenings reputed to be almost daily, or rather nightly, occurrences at Glamis are directly attributable to this Cup.

The legend is delightfully picturesque; but one can but think that it must be relegated to the dustbin reserved for exploded traditions of this nature. Reliable documentary evidence reveals the "Whyte Lyon," not as a typical bold and bad baron of the Middle Ages, but as an eminently worthy person who, despite the circumstance that he had made a vast amount of money, lived on terms of the utmost cordiality with his neighbours, lay and clerical alike. He was much closer to that early "baron of the house of Bradwardine, who had valiantly defended the patrimony of that monastery [of Aberbrothock] against certain encroaching nobles." And if the Luck of the Bowes-Lyons of Strathmore be fashioned as a lion in canting allusion to their name, it must be of a much later date than the late fourteenth century. It would seem to be of a type made commonly in Germany during the late sixteenth century and often copied by English goldsmiths of the period. It is probably of the time of that Patrick Lyon (1575-1615), who was created Earl of Kinghorne and Lord Lyon and Glamis in 1606 by King James VI. and I. and should presage for that reason not disaster but fortune and honour for the family.

A tradition of un-luck is attached to the "stanes three" of Fyvie Castle in Aberdeenshire. The curse may not be lifted until three stones from a "harryit kirk's land" are incorporated in certain specified parts of the building—and these stones have not been seen since the closing years of the fourteenth century. True Thomas, better known as Thomas the Rhymer or Thomas of Erceldoune, who before his final removal to Faery Land by his "ladye gaye" about 1297—an event for which everyone must have been profoundly thankful—won for himself Cassandra-like a most unenviable reputation as a true prophet of disaster, is said to have been responsible for pronouncing this curse upon the owners of Fyvie,

" Fyvyns riggs and towers,
 Hapless shall your mesdames be,
 Till ye shall hae within your methes
 Frae harryit kirk's land, stanes three—
 Ane in the oldest tower,
 Ane in my lady's bower,
 Ane below the water-yett:
 And if ye shall never get."

According to a tradition current in Aberdeenshire the gate of Fyvie tower had stood "wall-wide" for seven years and a day in the expectation of Thomas' coming. When at last he did arrive he brought with him, warlock-like, a fearful storm, one violent gust of which blew the gates to with a crash leaving the visitor without. Much put out at this inhospitable reception—which was entirely the outcome of his own wizardry—he cursed the tower and its inmates.

Fyvie Castle, originally a lonely peel built in the thirteenth century, was given by Robert III. of Scotland in 1390 to Sir James Lindsay the murderer of the "Whyte Lyon." Later the tower was alienated by the Lindsays to Henry de Preston who immediately proceeded to enlarge and beautify his property with stones from a neighbouring religious house that he had demolished. It was he who built Preston Tower. And during the progress of this work three stones, presumably regarded as having some sacro-talismanic character, fell into the river Ythan and were lost.

A second version of the prophecy says that the stones were built into the castle and must be identified and removed before the curse can be lifted.

" Fyvie, Fyvie, thou'se never thrive,
 As lang's there's in thee stanis three:
 There's ane intill the highest tower,
 There's ane intill the ladye's bower,
 There's ane aneath the water-yett,
 And thir three stanes ye'se never get."

It is usually stated that two of these stones have been found, but that the third beneath the gate leading to the Ythan has so far not been identified.¹

¹ Robert Chambers *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, edit 1870, p 221.

The doom pronounced by Thomas, not always as truthful as his name, has more or less been fulfilled. Sir Henry de Preston had only one daughter, his heir, who brought the castle by marriage to the Meldrums, and in the possession of this family it remained until 1597, when it was purchased by Alexander Seton, who built the Seton Tower at Fyvie. His son died childless and in poverty at St. Germain's, exiled for his support of the cause of King Charles. In 1733 Fyvie was bought by William Gordon, the second Earl of Aberdeen, who left it to William Gordon, his eldest son by his third marriage in 1745 the last of whose descendants died in 1884. In 1889 it was bought by Mr. Forbes-Leith, created Baron Leith of Fyvie in 1905. On the latter's death in 1925 the title became extinct, but the property passed to his daughter's son, Sir Robert Forbes-Leith, Bart., the name Forbes-Leith having been assumed by his father.

Fyvie, like Glamis, possesses a secret chamber, but there is no mystery about its situation for it lies beneath the Charter Room in the Meldrum tower. But it always remains fast closed lest misfortunes—even more serious than those that have so far come to pass—befall the owners of Fyvie.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPEAR OF LONGINUS

“ ceux qui l'auront vue, ne verront pas la mort éternelle, et n'auront pas honte le jour dont on ne connaît pas le soir, ne verront pas l'antechrist. Et le royaume ou elle se trouvera sera honorée et ce royaume ne perdra jamais son autorité.”

*Les saintes reliques de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ.*¹

THOUGH Ovid refers to the javelin that flies back to the hand that launched it, the conception of such a victory-bringing weapon is essentially northern, and in Teutonic mythology such missiles are far from uncommon. Thor's hammer is the outstanding example; and swords that brandish themselves are of fairly frequent occurrence. But the most famous example is, of course, Odin's wonderful spear, Gûngnir, which the god lends to heroes to bring victory.

Christianity converted the cups and horns of plenty that figure so largely in Eastern, Classical and Northern mythology into the far-famed Holy Grail, and Romance in turn garnished that Sacred Cup with a host of marvellous and graceful legends. By the same alchemy these two great transforming influences turned the Teutonic wishing-spear and Gûngnir, the magic spear of Odin, the helm of Odin and the bridle-bits that brought victory into the Sacred Spear of Longinus and into the Nails of the Passion that St. Helena gave to Constantine—"Clavos quoque quibus cum corpus Domini fuerat affixum, Helena portat ad filium. Ex quibus ille frenos composuit, quibus uteretur

¹ A thirteenth century Armenian manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, *unc arménien*, No. 74ff, 145-147, quoted by de Mély.

ad bellum et ex aliis galeam nihilominus belli usibus aptam fertur armasse."¹

"Longinus, which was a puissant knight, was" says Caxton "with other knights, by the commandment of Pilate, on the side of the cross of our Lord, and pierced the side of our Lord with a spear. . . . Some say that when he smote our Lord with the spear in the side, the precious blood avaled by the shaft of the spear upon his hands, and of adventure with his hands he touched his eyes, and anon he that had been tofore blind saw anon clearly, wherefore he refused all chivalry and abode with the apostles, of whom he was taught and christened, and after, he abandoned him to lead an holy life in doing alms and in keeping the life of a monk about thirty-eight years in Caesarea and in Cappadocia . . . And anon then the provost did do smite off his head, and after, he came and fell on the body of S. Longinus and said all in weeping, Sire: I have sinned; I knowledge and confess my filth, and anon came again his sight, and he received health of his body and buried honorably the body of S. Longinus."

Andrew of Crete in the eighth century is the only authority for the statement that the Lance of Longinus was found at the same time as the Holy Cross. No mention of such a discovery is made in the Chronicle of St. Jerome, in the Voyage of St. Silvia, who in the fourth century beheld the Cross at Jerusalem, nor in St. Paulinus of Noles who in 409 speaks of the Crown of Thorns, the Column of the Flagellation, of the Cross, and other relics of the Passion.

The first pilgrim to notice this "relic" of the Passion is Anthony the Martyr. When he visited the Holy City in 570 he found the Spear of the Passion in the Basilica of Syon close to the Column of the Flagellation and the Stones of the Lapidation of St. Stephen. Forty-four years later the adventures of this relic began. This first chapter in the history of its wanderings is chronicled by the Persian historian Tabari.

In 614 the Syrian army of Chosroes II. under the general Romiurzan, whom Noldeke has identified with Shahrbaraz, descended upon Palestine and laid siege to Jerusalem. Feebly defended, if at all, by its priestly garrison, it was

¹ St. Jerome.

taken at once and sacked with fearful slaughter. Zacharias was patriarch at that time and in the hopes of saving the most precious relics preserved in the Basilica he had them placed in a golden casket, which was buried by his orders in a garden beneath a bed of cabbages, no doubt in the hope that the growing vegetables would hide from prying eyes the disturbance of the earth. When the city fell Romiurzan discovered that the relics were missing. Maybe the wilting cabbages above the buried treasure gave away the hiding place; maybe by methods unpleasant in the extreme to those of whom the inquiries were made the Syrian general discovered what he wished to know, and the golden casket was lifted from its temporary grave.

Before its despatch to Ctesiphon, whither with the Wood of the True Cross and much other spoil from the fallen city, it was to be sent, the golden casket was opened, the Lance abstracted and the tip broken off by one of Shahrbaraz's officers. He gave this relic to the patrician Nicetâs, who in turn brought it to Constantinople and there it was deposited with due solemnity in the Church of St Sophia. At Constantinople the point of the Lance remained an object of veneration to all pilgrims permitted to see it, and during the twelfth century mention of this precious relic is frequent. When in 1204 the capital of the Eastern Empire fell before the Crusaders many of the relics were distributed among the sanctuaries of Western Europe. The point of the Holy Lance, though it fell to the share of Pierre de Bracieux, nevertheless remained in the possession of the new Emperor until 1241, when it was sent to St Louis, who placed it in a cross-shaped gem-set reliquary in Notre-Dame. At the Revolution this "curiosity", as it was then held to be, was removed to the Bibliothèque Nationale only to be lost in the last years of the century, after being spared by the apostles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

To return to the Lance itself, the despoiler of Jerusalem in 614 was himself vanquished by Heraclius, deposed by his own nobles and in February 628 murdered by his son and successor, Kavadh II. Sheroc. In the following year Sheroc disgorged some at least of his father's plunder, including the True Cross and the Sacred Spear, and on

September 14th, 629, Heraclius himself entered Jerusalem in the guise of a pilgrim clad in mean and humble raiment and bearing the True Cross upon his shoulder.

Modestus, the monk, had in the years that followed the destruction of the city made great efforts to restore some of its most celebrated buildings. The Basilica of Syon had been too completely destroyed to permit of this; but the Basilica of Constantine, that marked the site of the Holy Sepulchre, had been rebuilt and therein the Sacred Lance was lodged. And there it was seen by the Bishop Arculf in 670. Rather more than fifty years later, in 723, Willibald the man of Kent, who later became Bishop of Eichstadt, visited the Holy Places but did not see it. It would therefore appear probable that it was removed to the capital of the Eastern Empire about the commencement of the eighth century.¹

Thereafter there is a break in its history that research has failed to fill; and when next it re-appears in the ninth century we can find only the vaguest references which may apply either to the Lance itself or to its point, though it is possible that for a period the two relics were once more united.² Such at least would seem to be the most probable happening.

As has already been noticed the point of the Lance was sent to Louis IX. in 1241; the Lance itself does not make its re-appearance in documents until the close of the fourteenth century. Thereafter it is frequently mentioned by Russian pilgrims. In 1393 the scribe Alexander saw it in the Convent of Mangana. Between that date and 1419 it had been transferred to the Convent of St John where it was seen by the deacon Zozyne, and by Buondelmonte and other pilgrims.

With the fall of Byzantium in 1453 the Sacred Spear vanishes for thirty-nine years, re-appearing in 1492 when Bazajet offered it to Pope Innocent VIII.

¹ Bede, in his *Libellus de situ Hierusalem sive de Locis Sanctis*, written about 720, says that it was even then in the Basilica of Constantine. Bede's authority was Adamnan's *De Locis Sanctis*, which Adamnan himself confesses was taken down at the dictation of Arculf when the latter, after being shipwrecked on British shores, was being entertained by him at Iona.

² In the ninth century "the Lance" was in the Church of Our Lady of the Pharos, in the tenth at Blachernes, in 1150 in the Chapel of the Emperor, in 1159 in St Sophia, in 1171 again in the Chapel of the Emperor, and in 1203 at Bucoleon.

In May of that year Bazajet's gift arrived at Ancona in charge of his ambassador and accompanied, it is said, by a gift of 40,000 ducats. The Lance was at first looked upon askance by the majority of the Sacred College. Some maintained that the true Lance was preserved at Nuremberg, and others that it was to be found in the Sainte Chapelle at Paris. Other stories were no doubt current at the time and one recorded by Burchart asserted that the Venetians themselves had tried to buy the relic; that the Grand Seigneur had refused 70,000 ducats for it, and that the gift was intended to make a mock of the Christian religion. The Pope, however, accepted the relic without hesitation, and thereby proved himself a much better antiquary and historian than the cardinals who advised him. For though modern criticism declines to accept it as the True Lance there can be no serious question that it is the Lance that was first venerated as such in the splendid Basilica that Constantine erected in Jerusalem on the site of Golgotha.

On its arrival at Ancona the Lance was received by Niccolo Cibo, Archbishop of Arles. In a reliquary of gold and crystal, Luca Borsiano, Bishop of Foligno, brought it to Narni, and thence it was carried to Rome by the Cardinals Giuliano della Rovere and Giorgio Costa. The Pope himself was far from well at the time—he died two months later on July 25th—but he nevertheless determined to take part in its reception. On Ascension Day, May 31st, he met the Cardinals outside the Porta del Popolo, where with the reliquary in his hands he delivered an address on the Passion of Christ. Thence he carried it in procession through the streets of Rome amid scenes of wild enthusiasm to St. Peter's; later it was conveyed to the Pope's private apartments, and there it was kept,¹ until it was placed in the great shrine of Innocent VIII. unhappily destroyed in 1606.

Since its arrival in Rome in 1492 the Sacred Lance has never left the Vatican; but even in recent times it has been threatened with loss or destruction. M. de Mély, writing in 1897, says—"On m'affirme, et d'une source des plus autorisées, que la Sainte Lance, actuellement présentée à la veneration des fidèles, n'est qu'un *ectyphon*, fait il y a

¹ Ludwig Pastor. *The History of the Popes* (edited by F. I. Antrobus), vol. v (1898), p. 316.

quelques années, à un moment où le Saint Père, menacé d'un départ précipité, ne voulant pas laisser derrière lui une des plus précieuses reliques de la Passion, aurait fait mettre dans le reliquaire un fac-simile alors qu'il confiait la vraie relique aux soins d'un cardinal." Presumably this substitution took place during the troubles of 1870-1871 when the Papacy was robbed of its temporal possessions.

Romantic as without doubt is the history of the Vatican Lance, this "relic" would never seem to have been credited with any talismanic property. This was reserved for, and to some extent justified by, lances that can never have boasted a like antiquity.

Of these the most celebrated is the Lance of Antioch which was discovered on June 14th, 1098. News of this momentous event reached Pope Urban II in the same letter dated 11th September, from Bohemund of Taranto, Raymond de Saint-Gilles, Eustace, Count of Boulogne, and other leaders of the host, that announced the fall of Antioch. A full account of the miracle, for such it appeared to be, is given by Raymond, chaplain to Raymond de Saint-Gilles, Count of Toulouse, who was present at the actual discovery of the Lance and heard the depositions of the Provençal peasant which led to that strange happening.

Antioch had fallen on June 3rd, 1098, and only just in time. The Crusaders had surprised the city at dawn that day and on the 4th the cavalry scouts of the Moslem army that had come to relieve Yagı-Sıyan, the Turkish governor, appeared at the Iron Bridge upon the Aleppo road. The Crusaders were now between two fires—the army of Kerbogha without the walls and the garrison of the yet un-taken citadel within. And they were almost without food or water that was fit to drink. As the days passed matters became worse; to the horrors of starvation succeeded the horrors of disease. Mutiny was rife and desertions were frequent. But the army was still not without hope. As the fall of the city had been presaged by earthquakes, now signs and portents were seen by many and the rumour of them heard by all. A flaming star had been seen to fall behind the hostile lines. One Stephen, a priest, had told Adhemar, Bishop of Puy, how he had dreamed that Christ had come to him and told him that within five days help should come to the soldiers of the Cross.

And then the Bishop of Puy was visited by a ragged youth, a Provençal peasant—by some he is called a priest—by name Pierre Barthélemy. Twice Barthélemy had attempted to desert the host, twice he had failed. And now he came to the Bishop with a strange tale of a vision that he had seen and the promise of a potent talisman that should bring help to the beleaguered garrison. He had, so he swore, been sleeping one night in the Christian camp before the city fell and had been terrified by the earthquake. But in the midst of his terror he perceived two men in bright raiment, one old and bearded and one young, standing by him. On asking who they were the elder said that he was St. Andrew, and forthwith summoned his trembling questioner to follow him. The youth obeyed just as he was—in nothing but his shirt. Passing through the camp the visionary was led by his two guides to the northern gate of the city which stood open, into the city and to the Church of St. Peter therein, which had been turned into a mosque. Within, two lamps burned brightly and taking up his position against a column near the steps that led up to the Altar on the south side he watched. While the younger guide stood afar off by the Altar, the old man suddenly vanished into the ground but quickly reappeared bearing a spear-head in his hands. "Behold," said he, "the lance that opened the side of Him from Whom has come salvation to all the World."

Pierre would have taken the Lance but he was restrained, for, he was told, the city would be taken in a short while. Thereafter he was led back over the walls to the camp. Now, he assured the Bishop, he would show him the place where the precious relic was buried.

After some delay and hesitation Raymond de Saint-Gilles and eleven others with him went to the Church of St. Peter and there dug. But they found nothing. The Count's chaplain had not, however, abandoned hope and on the fifth day, acting on the promise of the priest Stephen, they went once more to the church and laboured from morn to vespers but again without result. Besides others there were present the Bishop of Orange, Raymond the chaplain and his lord, Raymond de Saint-Gilles, Ponce de Balazun and Ferald de Thuart. At last in desperation Pierre himself—again clad only in his shirt—leapt into the pit. Within a few minutes his frenzied efforts revealed the Lance. When

Raymond the chaplain saw its point above the ground he fell upon his knees and kissed it.

The joyful news ran like wildfire through the garrison; where despair had reigned unchecked, hope now ran high. Victory was assured. Bohemund, however, enjoined a three days' fast for all—though there was not a man among them who had had more to eat than a few green figs and a mouthful of horseflesh for more than a week—before sallying forth, an army of starving scarecrows to meet in pitched battle the united forces of Kerbogha, Prince of Mosul, Rudwan of Aleppo, Dokak of Damascus and Soloman ibn Ortuk, who commanded the army of Jerusalem.

Nevertheless on June 28th they left the shelter of the walls, horse and foot, camp-followers, thieves, priests and women, and to their marching song of,

“Lignum Crucis
Signum ducis
Sequitur exercitus
Quod non cessit
Sed praecessit
In vi Sancti Spiritus,”

they advanced, the Sacred Lance fastened in the centre of a cross in their van, upon the enemy. Rudwan of Aleppo had warned Kerbogha that the Christians were fierce fighters at all times, but now they were aroused to an access of fury that could only be matched by that of the Moslems themselves when seeking the shortest and swiftest road to Paradise. They fought like devils from the Pit. And the flames and smoke from dry grass that their enemies had lighted to stay them was as the sulphurous breath of Gehenna, and only seemed to make them more numerous. Before this desperate onslaught the Turkish army melted away. And when the sun sank the Christians were masters both of the field and of the Turkish camp, while its last beams lighted the banner of the Duke of Normandy, as it floated at last from the battlements of the citadel.

In circumstances less perplexed and in an army less troubled with national envies and prejudices this signal victory might have been held to afford proof positive of the authenticity of the Lance. Indeed by many of the leaders

of the host it was accepted unquestioningly. But there were some, either moved by honest doubt or swayed by jealousy of the Count of Toulouse, who looked at it with grave suspicion. For there must yet have been many among them who had seen that other Lance at Byzantium when the army gathered at the Imperial City in the spring of 1097. Some did not hesitate to say openly that it was an imposture and that Raymond de Saint-Gilles had fathered the deception. *Invenit lanceam, fallaciter occultatam forsitan*, says Fulcher of Chartres, by which presumably he meant that those that hide are in general the best finders. Nor were yet others lacking to dispute the doubtful honour of having found this questionable relic. Robert the Frieslander, Count of Flanders, asserted that it was to him that St. Andrew had appeared, and in memory of this wonderful visitation, his wife Clemence of Burgundy founded the Church of St. Andrew at Bruges. Even the identity of the heavenly visitant was in doubt and an Armenian version of the story says that he was St. Peter.

Matters finally came to a head at Arkah when Arnulf, chaplain to the Duke of Normandy, accused Barthélemy of fraud, asserting that the Lance was an Arab spear-head and therefore of a type unknown—and after two years war—to the Christian warriors. Barthélemy full of righteous wrath offered to undergo the ordeal by fire. Lance in hand, and if so much as a hair of him were singed to die the death. On Friday, April 8th, 1099, he passed through the fire—once more in his shirt—and unscathed, so says his old aider and abettor Raymond, the chaplain of St. Gilles. But so enthusiastic were the soldiers of the Cross who had assembled to witness this second miracle that they all but trampled the wretched man to death in their struggles to obtain portions of his unsinged shirt.

When finally rescued and carried to Raymond's tent he was found to have had his back, legs and ribs broken and of these injuries he very shortly died. His opponents quite naturally asserted that he had died of burns suffered in the ordeal.

With his last breath, Barthélemy called upon Raymond de Saint-Gilles to take the Lance for which he had given his life to Arles and there to build a church, Mons Gaudii, to house it. Such would seem to have been the Count's

intention, but on his return to Europe in 1101, and before setting out for Tripoli, which he hoped to turn into a kingdom for himself, he offered the relic to the Emperor Alexis. Deserted by his friends, betrayed by Alexis—ever faithless—Raymond's army was attacked near Nicea by the Sultan Kildj Arslan and almost wiped out. Returning to Antioch Saint-Gilles was clapped in irons by Tancred. Later he was released, only to die of the injuries he received when the roof of his castle, fired by the Saracens of Tripoli, collapsed beneath him.

We last hear of the Holy Lance of Antioch, still an ensign to arouse the enthusiasm of the warriors of the Cross, at the battle of Ascalon in 1124. Baldwin II., King of Jerusalem, was at that time a prisoner in the hands of Balak, Prince of Aleppo, and the Saracens of Egypt seized the opportunity to invade the kingdom. Fortified, however, by a portion of the True Cross, a few drops of the Virgin's Milk and the Sacred Spear, the last relic being carried by Ponce, ex-Abbot of Cluny, the Christians sallied forth against the invaders on April 18th and put them to flight.

What happened to it during the next hundred years we do not know. But a lance that was claimed to be the Holy Lance of Antioch makes its appearance in Armenia in the thirteenth century. It still exists, so far as is known, and there seems to be no good reason to doubt the claim made for it. Then, however, it was associated with three more lances, those of the three other legionaries who had stood upon Calvary when the Veil of the Temple was rent and the sun was darkened.

"Of the lances of four soldiers, three are with us in Armenia," runs a manuscript account of these relics discovered by M. de Mély.

"But the Lance of Salvation, which penetrated the well of the blood of Our Saviour, that streamed from His side, Longinus took it to one, blind of one eye from birth, who was healed and recovered his sight by the grace of this Lance. This holy Lance, dipped in the Divine Blood, the Crown of Thorns, and the right arm of St. Joseph of Arimathea, and the holy flagon of excellent oil, the figure of the Holy Virgin, were carried into Armenia by the holy apostle Thaddeus. Here follow the signs of the holy Lance that was thrust into the divine side that you may see and

know and that you may be assured so that the crafty Greeks shall not deceive you . . . The holy Lance of Jesus Christ, the treasure of heavenly light, is in Armenia, and those who have beheld it shall not see the everlasting death, they shall not dread the day of which none knows the evening, they shall not see the anti-christ And the kingdom where it rests shall be honoured and shall never lose its power. Now the holy Lance of Christ has this shape: the head is sharp and bent, pointed like that of a pointed pike; the centre is flat, four fingers wide, ornamented with angels,¹ pierced in the form of a cross, the broken pieces being riveted with four nails on the two sides of the face of the holy cross, as the Redeemer was nailed to His. And the pommel of the lance [from which the blade springs] in form of an hexagonal ball, and beneath this the socket of the lance, to a depth of four fingers has no sculpture or ornament, it is entirely without blemish and perfect These are the marks of the holy Lance of Jesus Christ "

A tradition recorded by the Armenian historian Vartan, who died in 1271, also asserts that the Lance of Antioch was found in the Church of St Peter at Antioch and that it was used by the Jews to pierce in derision the side of an image of the Saviour whence miraculously flowed a stream of blood and water, and that this lance was later sent to the Emperor Alexis. At the same time it insists that the real Lance was preserved in Armenia.

The Lance of Antioch thereafter disappears for the best part of four hundred years, though there were rumours that it was still existing in Armenia. When next heard of in the eighteenth century it was preserved in the Monastery of Kiékart, some leagues from Erivan, and thence it was removed to the Monastery of Estchmiazine. In 1805 during a quarrel between the two Armenian Patriarchs, David and Daniel, for supremacy, the Spear and sundry other relics were removed out of harm's way to Tiflis by Prince Tchitchanoff, who was then in command of the Russian troops in the Caucasus. It was he who, previous to the return of the Lance of Estchmiazine, had a drawing of it made which he sent to the Czar Alexander.

Whatever reasons may be urged on behalf of the Vatican Spear to be regarded as the authentic Spear of the Passion,

¹ or, *made by the angels.*

or at least to be the spear that was venerated as such in the great Basilica of Syon in the far off days of the sixth century, *the Sacred Spear* in popular estimation will be for all time that which for more than six centuries formed one, if not the principal, object in the regalia of the Holy Roman Emperors, and which now reposes in the ex-Imperial Treasury at Vienna.

The Lance of St. Maurice—for under this name the Imperial spear passes—is a characteristic Carolingian weapon of the winged type which on the evidence of innumerable finds would seem to have been very extensively produced in the region of the middle Rhine during the ninth and tenth centuries, though examples have been found as far west as Chartres and London, as far north as Scandinavia and as far south as Bohemia and the lake of Geneva. But at various times additions have been made to it which have materially disguised and altered its original outline.

From the earliest times the royal lance had been an emblem of power and authority—"Now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him"¹ And during the whole of the early Middle Ages investiture with the lance occupied a position of the highest importance. To quote M. de Mély—"En histoire, en littérature, en archéologie, nous la trouvons en première ligne; qu'on examine les miniatures carolingiennes, qu'on lise *Perceval le Gallois*, la *Chanson de Roland*, qu'on étudie les successions à l'Empire, partout on retrouve la Lance. Elle est avec L'Épée l'insigne du pouvoir. elle est surtout l'insigne de la puissance militaire, que la possession de la Lance peut seule donner."

It was a symbol of authority among the Anglo-Saxons. The laws of Edward the Confessor enjoined that the newly appointed head of the wapentake was to be received upon an appointed day by his eldest son, his thanes, the barons of the court baron, the manor, hundred and county courts, all kneeling before him, and that they were to touch his spear held upright with theirs.

Among the Frankish and Lombard nations delivery of a spear to the newly made monarch was an essential part of the

¹ 1 *Samuel* xiii, 6.

ceremony of his investiture. "Tradita in manum hasta pro sceptro, excelso in solio honorifice imponunt" writes Mortene of the Frankish kings. There is evidence that this emblem was delivered at the inaugurations of Childeric I. in 458, and Childebert II. in 575. And the right enjoyed by some German monarchs to have a spear borne before them was an honour which might be granted by the Roman Emperor alone. Otto III. granted this privilege—*sicut ipsi imperatori mos est*—to St. Stephen of Hungary. The Lance, stated to have been a Holy Lance, was probably that which Abbas of Hungary, after his abortive rebellion, surrendered in 1043 to the Emperor Henry III. The same privilege was granted in 1079 by the Emperor Henry IV. to Vratislav, Duke of Bohemia, and his descendants in memory of the circumstance that he had captured the Royal Lance of Rudolf of Swabia at the battle of Fladeheim—"Dux et Rex Bohemiae regalem Lanceam adeptus, quae exinde permissione Imperatoris semper quemvis illius gentis ducatus insignem in omni festiva Processione praecedit."¹

When therefore the lance of investiture, an emblem always of the first importance, was indeed, or was at least believed to be, the veritable Lance of the Passion it is not difficult to understand the struggles that have raged about it, the battles that have been fought for its possession, and the cares that have rested upon the shoulders of those charged with its preservation.

The documented history of the Sacred Lance of the Holy Roman Emperors, which passed generally under the name of the Spear of St Maurice, "duke of the right holy legion of Thebans", who was martyred in the reign of the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, commences in the early years of the tenth century.

At that time Berengar I. was King of Italy. Though a soldier of no small ability his despotic rule and manifold acts of injustice and tyranny had turned the grudging admiration of his Lombard nobles into a deep hatred. Disgruntled subjects had then—and for long afterwards—a rough and ready way of dealing with their unpopular overlords and in 924 Berengar was assassinated. The throne being unoccupied the Lombard Princes invited

¹ Monachus Pegaviensis, ex eo Conradus Abb Uspergensis Albertus Stadensis—quoted by DuCange, s v *Lancea regalis*.

Rudolf II., King of Burgundy, to accept the crown. He accepted and at Pavia he received from the hands of Count Samson, one of the Prince-Electors, the Royal Lance. Not long afterwards Henry the Fowler, Emperor of Germany, heard of this "inestimabile donum celeste." Having no scruples and an insatiable appetite for such relics, especially those that would enable him "to prepare unconquerable arms for and an everlasting triumph over his enemies both visible and invisible,"—Luitprand prefers to call him "Dei timens, totiusque religionis amator"—he made overtures to Rudolf with the object of obtaining the Lance. His honeyed words and promises having failed to persuade the King of Italy to yield, Henry changed his tune and threatened to come with fire and sword and take both the Lance and his kingdom. The threat took effect and Rudolf with what grace he could surrendered the Lance. Henry was overjoyed at his triumph and rewarded Rudolf with great gifts of gold and silver and even ceded to him the major part of the province of Swabia.

Luitprand, himself a Lombard brought up at the courts of Berengar and of his predecessor Hugh, furnishes us with a vivid pen-picture of the Lance. In his day it was known as the Spear of Constantine the Great. It differed, he says, from all other lances, being of a certain new fashion and a new shape, having a window on either side of the central rib, the central rib itself being garnished with crosses made of one of the Nails from the True Cross.¹

From Henry the Fowler the Lance passed to Otto the Great, and from him to his son Otto II. We catch a fleeting glimpse of it at the disaster near Stilo in Apulia in July 982 when Otto's chivalry went down before the allied arms of the Saracens and the Emperor of the Greeks. And we see it again in pride borne before Otto III., then newly crowned, when he rode out of Ratisbonne in 996.

It is not however until the reign of Henry III. that we have more than these fleeting glimpses. From the reign of Otto the Great the Imperial regalia was apparently

¹ The description is not very intelligible, but the above would appear to be the sense of the passage. *Annalista Saxo* reproduces only the more important part of the passage in his Saxon Chronicle, himself it would seem being rather at a loss as to the meaning of all of it.

kept in the Abbey of Saint Maurice in Valais according to Thomas Tiscus, where we find it in association with an Imperial bit—"le mors fait d'un clou du Seigneur."

It was while in the charge of this Abbey that certain additions were made to the Spear by the Emperor Henry III. Two wide triangular plates of metal were wired to the base of the blade and in the centre was placed a pierced plate of silver engraved with a description of the Spear.

CLAVVS DOMINICVS ✠ HEINRICVS D I GRA TERCII ROMANO.
IMPERATOR AUG. HOC ARGENTVM JUSSIT FABRICARI AD
CONFIRMATIONĒ CLAVI DÑI ET LANCEE SANCTI MAVRICII.
SANGTVS MAVRICIVS.

[The Nail of Our Lord ✠ Henry by the Grace of God the third of the Romans, Emperor Augustus, ordered this [plate of] silver to be made for proof of the Nail of Our Lord and the Lance of St Maurice. St. Maurice]

This plate was and is held in position by a gold wrapper.

In the troubled days of the thirteenth century the regalia was preserved at Hammerstein near Andernach, Haguenau, Nuremberg, Kyfhausen, Tilleda and Merla. In 1273 it was in the Castle of Kyburgh under the care of Agnes Queen of Hungary, daughter of the Emperor Albert I. There it remained until 1308 when it was taken to Aix la Chapelle for the coronation of the Emperor Henry VII. From 1308 to 1350 the Lance was in the charge of Rudolf of Austria, Louis of Bavaria and the Margrave of Brandenburg.

In 1353 Charles IV sought and obtained permission from Pope Innocent VI to fête the Holy Lance and hold a special service for it throughout Germany and Bohemia. In 1360 it was taken to Prague and it was no doubt at this time that the gold cover added by Henry III. was engraved with the inscription—LANCEA ET CLAVVS DOMINI.

On March 21st, 1424, it arrived at Nuremberg whither it was brought by the Emperor Sigismund by the authorization of Pope Martin V. And there it remained until 1800.

In that year General Jourdan laid siege to Nuremberg but before the threat of such a happening the Lance was removed to Regensburg by the Baron von Hugel, chief-

commissaire of the Diet at Regensburg, and there placed in the archives. Still fleeing before the French invasion he removed it next to Passau, thence to Linz, and finally to Vienna where it arrived on October 29th, 1800. And there it has remained ever since.

There is maybe an even closer connexion between these Sacred Spears and the mythical spear of Odin than is generally suspected. De Mély himself traced back the history of the Spear of St Maurice, that later became the most potent talisman in the Imperial regalia, to Northern Italy. Tradition certainly connected it with Pavia, Monza and Milan in the fertile plain of Lombardy; while Grimm, hesitantly one must admit, suggested that the name of the Lombard royal line of Guninge was closely connected with Gúngnir.¹ Is it stretching possibility too far to suggest that the kings of Lombardy were descended from the Spear of Odin, or at all events regarded this victorious weapon as their totem?

Archaeologically, historically and traditionally there is a very close connexion between the Holy Lance of the Imperial regalia and the similarly named Lance preserved in the Treasury of the Cathedral at Cracow in Poland. In outline these two Spears of St. Maurice closely resemble one another. The second is also a winged spear-head of tenth century type; and this general resemblance has been increased by the two long "windows" towards its point and on either side of the median rib which to the casual observer might easily appear to be a second Nail, and by the wrappings of foil and wire with which it has been encased.

Tradition has it that this latter "Spear of St Maurice" was given in the year 1000 to Boleslas the Valiant, Duke and later King of Poland by the Emperor Otto III, when the latter made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Adalbert at Gneze in Poland. This is all that M. Przedziecki knew or cared to record of its history, traditional or otherwise. He, however, drew attention to the circumstance previously noted that the Emperor had granted to St. Stephen of Hungary permission to have a Sacred Lance borne before him, and he hazarded the conjecture that the Cracow Spear had been made to the order of the

¹ *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. iv, pp. 1332-1333.

Emperor Otto and copied from the Imperial emblem to give to his powerful ally Boleslas of Poland.

These conclusions would in the main appear perfectly valid. The Spear was clearly copied from that now at Vienna. But there is no evidence to shew that the latter acquired its present shape by the addition of the existing large triangular plates at its base and the pierced and inscribed silver plate lapped in gold before the reign of the Emperor Henry III. (1039-1056). Nor is there any evidence that similar plates were attached to this spear-head at an earlier date; indeed had there been such they would almost certainly have borne some indication of the nature of the relic, in which case there would have been no need for the Emperor Henry III.'s annotation. We are therefore compelled, if not to the belief, at least to recognize the probability that the Spear of Poland is of the reign of Henry III. or later.

Even England at one period possessed a lance for which an only slightly less exalted claim was made. This was the spear of Charlemagne "*quam Imperator invictissimus contra Sarracenos exercitum ducens si quando in hostes vibrabat, nunquam nisi victor abibat,*" that Hugh the White or the Great (*d.* 956) Count of Paris and Duke of France sent to Athelstan (*reg.* 925-940) when he sought the hand of one of that king's sisters. The gifts included the sword of Constantine the Great "in which the name of its ancient possessor might be read in letters of gold: in the hilt also over thick plates of gold you might see an iron nail affixed, one of the four that the persecution by the Jews of the body of Our Lord prepared for his execution"; the banner that St Maurice, chief of the Theban legion, had borne in Spain and forced his enemies to flee; a golden diadem; a piece of the Cross and a piece of the Crown of Thorns.

He also adds that the Spear of Charlemagne was also that of the Passion—"Ferebatur esse eadem quae Dominico lateri centurionis manu impecta pretiosi vulneris hiatus paradisum miseris mortalibus aperuit."

Some of these relics Athelstan gave to Malmesbury but the gifts did not apparently include the sword, the spear or the banner. Such were too potent to lock up.

Athelstan was at Abingdon at the time and the Abingdon chronicle mentions the gifts.

Part of the Nail in the sword he gave to Godescale, Abbot of Abingdon.

It must not be imagined that the foregoing exhausts the list of so-called Lances of the Passion. Others at one time existed at Ancona, Clairvaux, Namur and Saint-Claude in Jura, while a fifth was, previous to the Suppression by Henry VIII., at Reading; yet others are mentioned by Calvin. There are or were many more spears to which the names of martyrs or military saints were attached with just as little justification. A Lance of St. George was in the Vatican Treasury; several other spears of St. Maurice are recorded, the Spear of St. Thomas the Apostle is at Goa. Others obviously of a one time sacred character are known in collections though the names of the saints or martyrs with which they were once associated have been lost. One splendid specimen of the fourteenth century, inlaid with bands of latten engraved with the Angelic Salutation and the greater part of the alphabet, was in the famous Thill collection. It is now in a private collection in England. A second with a pierced blade seemingly of the tenth century and mounted on a copper gilt fifteenth century foot, is in the collection of Captain John Ball.

CHAPTER V

TENURE LUCKS

WITH the dawn of the Middle Ages a fresh impulse was provided for the manufacture of talismans. Upon the primitive belief in the protective and fortune-bringing character of certain objects was superimposed the knowledge that objects of the same physical character might be and were employed for the conveyance of lands and offices. To the vast majority the ability to read a charter, even in their own tongue, much less in Latin, was wanting. Something understandable by all had to be substituted, and during the greater part of the early Middle Ages, the lord's cup, his sword or his spurs, given to his tenant and known by sight to the lord's heirs and assigns, furnished the tenant with his title to his lands or office.

There exist records of literally scores of what are or were in essence "lucks," in that they were at one time the sole evidence in the possession of their holders of their rights to lands or offices that they held. The pseudo-Ingulf was no historian but he was at least an authority on what was believed in his own day—the early years of the fifteenth century. Writing with his eye upon the practices with which he came in daily contact he says—"Conferebantur etiam primo multa prædia nudo verbo, absque scripto vel Charta, tantum cum domini gladio, vel galea, vel cornu, vel cratera; et plurima tenementa cum calcari, cum strigili, cum arcu; et nonnulla cum sagitta." These swords, helms, horns, cups and so forth were the visible evidences of the conveyance of the lands or property or offices in *frankalmoigne* or in *fee* with which they were associated.

On the ivory haft of a knife that lay throughout the Middle Ages in the Treasury at Tavistock was the inscription "✠ Ego Willielmus rex dedi Deo et sanctae Mariae de Tavistoc terram Wlerintum," evidence that so long as the Abbot of Tavistock held this knife of William Rufus so long should he hold the manor of Wlurintun, apparently Walreddon. Alberic de Vere granted by knife certain lands in Hatfield Regis in 1135. By a third knife Fulcher de Bueil granted the area that lay before the portals of Nôtre-Dame in Paris to that Church. And it was by a *baculum* or staff that the Priory of Belvoir held the Church of Plungard, and by a riding switch or rod that one Gilbert de Newcastle gave four mares to the Abbot of St. Albans.

Not unnaturally the proofs of a tenure were the most cherished possessions of the holder. With the King's justices liable to pay an unexpected and unwelcome visit armed with a writ of *Quo warranto*, to inquire by what rights a man might hold his lands, the unhappy wight who could not produce sound evidence that he held them lawfully was liable to find himself, whether guilty or not, in an awkward position, especially if he were not in high favour with those who had the Royal ear. And not everyone might prove as fortunate as John, the stout Earl of Warenne or Surrey, who when the justices visited him in 1279 unsheathed "an ancient and rusty sword" with the words—"Here is my warranty. My ancestors, who came with William the Bastard, conquered their lands with the sword, and with the sword will I defend them against all who desire to seize them. For the king did not conquer his lands by himself, but our ancestors were his partners and helpers."¹

To modern ears this reads like a stupendous piece of bluff, and it has been read as such by many historians. Edward, the English Justinian, admittedly had to walk warily when his legal reforms ran counter to the privileges and susceptibilities of his barons. And the Earl's dramatic gesture has been taken as intended for a warning to the King that the latter was treading upon dangerous ground. Again the circumstance that Edward shortly afterwards dropped the inquiry has been assumed to confirm this belief. But when the Earl outfaced his questioners the

¹ Hemmiburgh, II, 6

inquiry had been proceeding for four years. And there is ample proof that many lands and offices were held by ensigns much less substantial than swords.

In the course of time and by a very easily understandable transmutation these evidences of a feudal tenure became in all but name the "lucks" of the families that held them. The Luttrells, or to be strictly accurate the Fownes-Luttrells, of Dunster, who can claim an unbroken descent from the time of Henry III. have been lords of the manors of Dunster, Minehead, Carhampton, Withycombe, Old Cleeve, East Quantoxhead and other places in the county of Somerset for centuries. And their castle of Dunster, set high among the trees of an old deer-forest on a hill above the village, was bought by Elizabeth Courtenay, daughter of Hugh, Earl of Devon, and wife of Sir Andrew Luttrell, in the county of Devon, from the Lord Mohun of Dunster in 1376.

It was her son, Sir Hugh Luttrell of Dunster (*d.* 1428), afterwards Seneschal of Normandy and one of the commanders before Harfleur in 1415, who in the eighth year of Henry IV. was forced to fight in law for his possessions against such potent antagonists as Edward Plantagenet, Duke of York, and the other heirs of John, Lord Mohun of Dunster. He won his case and established possession of the Honour and Castle of Dunster and the Hundred of Carhampton. It is therefore scarcely to be wondered at that the original receipt for the purchase money is yet kept in a glass case in the great hall of the castle, and is regarded as one of the most precious possessions of the family.

Similar documents, proof of rights of possession, or other and equally important rights which lay in the hands of the King, must have often become lucks as they in the course of time became heirlooms. One of the most curious of these survivals is the Cooling Charter, a series of enamelled copper plates fashioned together in the likeness of a charter with its seal appended, which is nailed to the wall of the great Gate House of Cooling Castle in Kent. Something has been written of this unique survival in various learned and other journals. But its history, so far as I am aware, has not yet been elucidated.

The "charter" professes to record the royal grant of

right to embattle Cooling Castle granted to John, Lord Cobham, in the reign of Richard II —

“Knouwyth that beth and schul be
That I am mad in help of the cuntre
In knowyng of whyche thyng
Thys is chartre and wytnessyng.”

The recorded history of the “charter” is about as confusing as such a chronicle can well be, and it has at different times been described by people who have seen it as carved in stone, and as fashioned either of brass or of brass enamelled. Lambard (1570) and Richard Kilburne knew or at all events recorded nothing of it. Seemingly the earliest reference to it is contained in Thomas Philipott’s *Villare Cantianum*, published in 1659, wherein¹ he notes that John, Lord Cobham, after receiving his charter from Richard II. caused “the whole Tenor of it . . . to be inscribed in a large Table of Stone upon the Front of the Castle, so carefull was Hee to conform to the Laws of the Land which had a particular Aspect upon private enbattelling a Species of Fortification, prohibited *si facta fuerit sine Licentia Domini Regis*” John Harris, sixty years later, in his *The History of Kent*, published in 1719, likewise records² that Lord Cobham caused his grant “to be carved or cut in a large Table or Stone, and placed on the Front of the Castle, where,” he adds, apparently from personal observation, “part of it remains visible to this Day” In a brief description of Cooling Castle contributed to *The Gentleman’s Magazine* for November, 1773³ it is noted that the charter “seems of brass; the letters are engraved in the ancient characters, and in 1759, when this drawing [of the Castle] was taken, were as legible as when first set up” Edward Hasted in 1778 only contributes the observation that the inscription was “engraved on brass.”⁴

The “charter” was first illustrated by that indefatigable antiquary John Gough, who reproduced a drawing of it

¹ *Villare Cantianum*, p. 126

² Bk. 1, pt. III, p. 370

³ p. 536

⁴ *The History of the County of Kent*, vol. 1, p. 539, note b

in the second part of his *Sepulchral Monuments*, published in 1796.¹ If we can trust his reproduction the "charter" would appear at that date to have been in a somewhat damaged condition; the right tassel of the seal cord was missing, the seal itself shewed no vestige of arms, and three of the enamelled panels in the first and last rows were badly decayed

At some date between 1796 and 1863, apparently about 1850, the "charter" was maliciously damaged and some of the plates of which it is built up were removed and thrown into the moat, whence they were later recovered. In 1863, during the Rochester Meeting of the Archæological Institute, the castle of Cooling was visited and the "charter" received such attention that in the autumn of the following year it was carefully surveyed by J. G. Waller and C. Roach Smith.² Six years later Canon W. A. Scott Robertson included a full account of it in his description of Cooling Castle read before the Kent Archæological Society.³ Thereafter it seems to have been ignored until 1926, when Mr. Henry Smetham in his *Rambles Round Churches in the Land of Dickens*,⁴ asserted that—"The above plate is not—as frequently thought—the original plate. The former had perished or disappeared. This is a copy. It was made and engraved by the late F. W. Fairholt, F.S.A., who died in 1867⁵. . . . It was [C. Roach Smith], who had contributed to the cost of this plate who gave the writer the particulars above noted"

The result of inquiries made by Mr. Aymer Vallence and published in *Archæologia Cantiana*⁶ would seem to establish beyond doubt that though not probably an entire restoration (admittedly faithful), as asserted by Mr. Smetham, a great part of the "charter" is comparatively modern, and, if we can rely on the evidence—slight it must be admitted—of Hasted, Gough and the contributor to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, the greater part of the enamel.

Apart from the authenticity of the "charter" as it now

¹ p. cclvi and pl. xxx

² *Archæological Journal*, xxiii, pp. 233-234.

³ *Archæologia Cantiana*, xi, pl. op. p. 134

⁴ Vol. II, pp. 16 and 17

⁵ He actually died in April, 1866

⁶ Vol. xxxix.

exists, another question requires an answer—to what period did the original “charter” belong? It has always been asserted and accepted that it was set up between 1381 and 1385 by John, Lord Cobham, either during or just after his conversion under royal licence of his house at Cooling into a castle. But to the unprejudiced the presence of this defiant “charter” with its pendant seal upon the gate tower at Cooling is suggestive rather of the wild imaginings of the evangelists of the Gothick Revival than of sober history. There is about it the flavour of the enchanted castle in the Vale of St John, of the fadeless escutcheons over the gloomy portal and the “stern inscription” upon the gate, cut

“In shapeless characters of yore.”

Its recorded history, however, shews it to be no eighteenth century forgery. Moreover, the “make up” and diction of the monument prove beyond doubt that it cannot even be a production of the early seventeenth century, one of the many false “documents” that made their appearance about 1630. Conversely it cannot be of the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. Such an inscription is entirely out of keeping with mediaeval usage. At the most such notices would seem to have taken the form of that set up over the inner gate of Brougham Castle, Westmorland, and now removed to a position over the outer gate.

Generally accepted, at least in the north of England, as of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, this tablet appears to be actually of the third quarter of the fifteenth century and contemporary with a similar inscription at Hutton John which was set up seemingly by Thomas Hoton of Hutton John who flourished about 1475.

On typographical grounds the Cooling “charter” proclaims itself a work not of the late fourteenth century but of the commencement of the sixteenth century. The parallel of every letter can be found upon brasses and tombs of between 1500 and 1530, and at no other period. But it does not follow therefrom that it is of even this comparatively early period. Forgeries of quasi-mediaeval documents of every century are known.

To my mind there is a very close kinship between the crude lines of the "charter," certainly more than a century and maybe even a century and a half later than the incident that they commemorate, and similar inscriptions, but in a language not deliberately and affectedly archaic, which are fairly common in the north of England. They make their first appearance in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Over the door at Newbiggin Hall appears,

"Cristofer Crakanthorpe thus ye me call
Whiche in my tym dyde bylde this hall.
The yer of our Lord who lyst to see
A M. fyve hundreth thyrti and three."

A variant was set up by Richard Cleburn in 1567 at Cleburn Hall. A more archaic—I might say Gothick—verse may be seen at Askham Hall, Westmorland,

"Thomas Sandford esquyr
For thys payd meat & hyr[e]
The year of our savyore
XV hundredth seventy foure."

I know of no written grant with which the Cooling "charter" may be compared; but again I am tempted to connect it with folk rhymes of a commemorative character, such as that which records the supposed gift by "time honoured Lancaster" of the manor of Umberleigh to the Bassetts,

"I John of Gaunt do give and grant
To thee and thine, from me and mine,
The manor and fee of Umberleigh
And in token of my truth do seal it with my tooth."¹

I do not suggest that there is any direct connexion between the Cooling "charter" and any of the foregoing, which merely prove that such commemorative doggerel verses were common in the middle and second half of the sixteenth century, and were placed on buildings in the

¹ William Crossing *Folk Rhymes of Devon*, pp 91 *et seq* where other versions are given

same position approximately as the "charter." The direct inspiration of the "charter" I am tempted to see in the brass of that presumably eccentric gentleman Ralf de Cobham of Chafford, Sir John's very distant cousin, who died in 1402 and lies buried at Cobham under a half length brass that represents him in complete plate, his gauntleted hands clasping to his midriff a rectangular plate inscribed,

"Rauf de Cobham de kent Esquier
Qe murrust le xx^e iour de Januer
lan de grace mill. cccc ij gist icy.
Dieu de sa alme eyt mercy."

Apart from the statement of Ingulf that *cratera* were used in this way, there is ample collateral evidence of the tenure of lands by possession of a cup or goblet. Richard d'Argenten in 1210-1212 held estates in Wymondley "per serjanteriam serviendi cum j cuppa argentea ad coronationem Regis"¹ And Simeon of Durham records that Copsi, Earl of Northumbria, gave certain lands to the Abbey of Durham, and "in cujus donationis signum etiam scyphum argenteum obtulit, qui in hac ecclesia servatus, aeternam illius facti retinet memoriam."²

The best remembered of these drinking vessels, at one time precious evidences of a tenure, is the Pusey Horn, the great brown bull's horn harnessed with silver gilt, by which, according to the tale which was old when Camden repeated it in 1607, King Canute granted the manor of Pusey to one William Pusey. And if we might believe the auctioneer's clap-trap that was published in 1932 when the Bouverie-Puseys offered their ancestral estate for sale, the lands of Pusey have been in the same family by virtue of this horn since before the Norman Conquest. In such circumstances the Pusey Horn has every right to be regarded as a luck if not a magic talisman

The only pity about this picturesque story is that it cannot be true, despite the circumstance that Lord Chancellor Jefferies, doubtless an excellent lawyer but no

¹ *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, vol. II, p. 507

² *Chronicles and Memorials—Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia: Historia Ecclesiae Dunelmensis*, vol. I, p. 97

antiquary, accepted it at its face value—"the horn itself being produced in court, and with universal admiration received, admitted, and proved to be the identical horn, by which, as by a charter, Canute had conveyed the manor of Pusey 700 years before."¹ The Red Judge was not the first lawyer to be taken in by a spurious document, when an antiquary could have put him right. There can have been no William Pusey before the Conquest. There was no Pusey at that time, but had there been that Pusey could not have borne the Christian name of William. Moreover, we know that the Puseys who lived a century after the Conquest held their manor of the Abbot of Abingdon

And the Pusey Horn itself, despite the fact that upon its lip is engraved the sentence,

"Kyng Knowde geve Wylyyam Peuse
This horne to holde by thy lond,"

proclaims its falseness and its period. Its enrichments and the engraving are all of the late fifteenth century. And that which puts the seal upon its condemnation is the circumstance that the hound's head finial that closes its tip *screws* into the mount; and screws in any shape or form are unknown before the close of the fifteenth century.

It is untrue also that the Puseys have held the land since the Conquest until to-day—or at all events until the day when their lands were recently sold. For in 1772 the last of the Puseys was dead and the lands and the horn were in the care of his sister, Mrs. Jane Allen,² whose son parted with them to a Mr Bouverie who took the name of Pusey, having no drop of the right blood in him

Very few, unhappily, of these tenure horns are associated with either legends or historical incidents of any particular merit or picturesqueness. The only one that can claim to be in any way an exception to this rule is the Horn of the Manor of Boarstall in Buckinghamshire.

¹ George Hickes *Linguarum Vett Septentrionalium Thesaurus* 1705, pt I.
p xxv

² *Archæologia*, vol iii, p 13.

If we can trust the numerous legends that have come down to us there was in ancient days scarcely a forest in this country that was not infested by some monstrous beast—serpent, boar, or bear—that made sport unthinkable and rendered a journey through its dim fastnesses a matter of very considerable danger. And in the days of Edward the Confessor the Royal forest of Bernewood was in no way peculiar, for it was haunted by a boar of enormous size and prodigious savagery. The saintly King, when he could spare time from pious works, was addicted to the chase and at Brill, within the forest, he had a hunting lodge. But the presence of this fearsome animal made indulgence in his favourite pastime an impossibility. Happily in the King's train there was a certain huntsman, Nigel, surnamed Short-Shirt, a by-name that sounds much better in the dog-Latin of the day—*cum corta tunica*—and Nigel, knowing that kings were generous, determined to slay the pest. He carried out his intention and presented the boar's head to the King upon his sword point, being duly rewarded with one hyde of arable land called Derehyde together with Hurlewood and the keepership of the Forest of Bernewood to be held by him and his heirs *per unum cornu, quod est charta praedictae forestae*.

In memory of this adventure and its fortunate sequel Nigel built himself a house which he called Boarstall, which John Handlo, his descendant, received licence to fortify in 1312.

Both "Nigel's Horn" and his manor of Boarstall are now in the possession of Sir Launcelot Aubrey Fletcher to whom, to quote an old writer in *Archaeologia*, "this estate has descended without alienation or forfeiture, from before the Conquest, to the present time, by several heirs female from the family of Nigel." This is still substantially accurate, for there is record of only one intrusion, that of the de Lisures who held the manor shortly after the Conquest. They, however, returned the estate to the FitzNigels, whose descendants have held it peacefully ever since. Even in the troubled days of the Great Rebellion it remained in the possession of its rightful owners though, like Basing House, a hot-bed of Papistry. Waller in 1644 summoned its chatelaine Penelope, Lady Dynham, to surrender, but on her refusal thought better of an attempt

to lay siege to it. And the following year Fairfax "amused himself" about Boarstall Hall and had his knuckles rapped by the Council for wasting time that might have been better employed elsewhere.

A third horn is that by which one Walter Achard or Agard is said to have claimed to hold the offices of escheator and coroner of the Honour of Tutbury, in Staffordshire, and the bailiwick of Leyke, in Nottinghamshire—"a white hunting horn, enriched with silver gilt in the midst and at either end; to which is affixed a belt of black silk ornamented with silver buckles, in the midst of which are placed the arms of Edmund, the second son of Henry III."¹ The existing horn bears out this description, save that the arms are not those borne by Edmund Crouchback, son of Henry III.—that is *England charged with a label*, impaling *Ferrers*—but a fifteenth century version of them—*England and France (modern) quarterly (not France and England) with a label charged with fleurs-de-lys* impaling *Ferrers*.

Edmund Crouchback married no Ferrers. But Robert Ferrers, Earl of Derby, forfeited the Honour of Tutbury to the Crown in the reign of Henry III., who granted the Honour to Edmund. The latter's great-grand-daughter married John of Gaunt, thus bringing the Honour of Tutbury into the possession of the House of Lancaster. The arms are obviously retrospective and depict Lancaster impaling the Honour of Tutbury.

In later years the heiress of Agard married a Stanhope, whose descendant, Charles Stanhope of Elveston, sold the horn and the offices to Samuel Foxlove of Staveley in whose possession they were in 1772.

The Hooton Horn of the Stanleys of Hooton in Wirral is said to be that given by Randal de Meschines, Earl of Chester, in 1124 to Alan Silvester together with the bailiwick of Wirral Forest. The office passed by marriage from the Silvesters to the de Bamvilles of Storeton, and it was Joan, daughter and co-heir of Sir Philip de Bamville, who in 1382 made a run-away marriage with Sir William de Stanlegh, Lord of Stanlegh, in the county of Stafford, and brought the Chief-Forestership of Wirral into the house of Stanley. And in "proof" of the antiquity of the office and the Horn, the Hooton Horn bears the arms

¹ Blount. *Fragmenta Anthiquitatis*, p 25

attributed to Edric Silvaticus the supposed ancestor of the Silvesters: *argent, a tree eradicated vert.*

It need hardly be said that none of these horns is of the period to which it is supposed to belong. The Boarstall, Tutbury, and Hooton Horns are all three of the same type and are or were mounted with baldricks of the same fashion. The Boarstall Horn is certainly earlier than the days of Sir Edmund Rede, who inherited the manor in 1432, died in 1489 and in his will left the Horn to his heir together with the Boarstall Chartulary. Therein, having a mind to produce documentary evidence in support of the antiquity of his tenure, he caused to be drawn a very pleasing little picture of Nigel Short-Shirt presenting the Confessor with the boar's head upon his sword point, and receiving in return his coat of arms—*argent a fess gules between two crescents and a bugle horn, vert*—arms which, by the way, no FitzNigel ever bore. The Tutbury Horn must from the heraldry thereon be later than the reign of Henry IV. Probably, without going too deeply into the matter, we should be safe in assuming that these two and the Hooton Horn, which bears the arms of the Silvesters, a family which became extinct early in the fourteenth century, are all of about 1410 to 1430.

The forgery of these tenure horns is of considerable interest, for we know that the early years of the fifteenth century witnessed the production of one of the most amazing forgeries of all time. Between 1413 and 1416 Richard, Prior of Croyland, manufactured the famous Chronicle, which purported to be the work of Ingulf, the twelfth century Abbot of Croyland. Prior Richard forged charters by the dozen to support the claims of his house in certain legal troubles of theirs, and it is probable too that he was responsible for the appearance or re-appearance of another pseudo-historic horn, but one to which nothing more than a sentimental value was attached. This was the famous horn of Witlaf, King of Mercia, that the pseudo-Ingulf asserts was saved from the great fire at Croyland—"the horn from his own table, for the elder monks of the house to drink out of on saints days and that when they gave thanks they might remember the soul of Witlaf the giver."

The transformation of such an emblem as the Pusey Horn from a legitimate visible sign of tenure to an object

almost of veneration, something on which the prosperity of a house depended, is easily understood though in all cases where such a change occurred it must have taken several generations to come about. Once the circumstances that prompted the original gift and the conditions of that tenure were forgotten—in many cases the terms of the tenure may have changed—the object would automatically alter its character from the actual and mundane to the marvellous. While the memory of its service would survive, its nature would be forgotten.

The next stage in the development was to provide the horn with a fabulous history—the memory of half forgotten early myths percolating upwards through the superimposed layer of legal practice. And fabulous histories were easily manufactured—and as easily assimilated by the mediaeval digestion, weaned upon miracles and mages, fairies, goblins and dragons.

Belief in the marvellous qualities of such horns was encouraged by the romances of Charlemagne and his Paladins. And even Roland's Oliphant, that summoned the army of Charlemagne to return to Roncevalles, was justified by the pseudo-science of the period as Mr. Thorndike has pointed out.¹ In that portion of a thirteenth century manuscript preserved at Munich and once the commonplace book of Albertus Bohemus or Beham, dean of the church of Padua, devoted to a transcript of the pseudo-Aristotelean *Secret of Secrets* is "a delineation of a brazen horn made with marvellous art by which Alexander in time of war summoned his army from a distance of sixty miles."² A horn of like nature is the Horn of Temistru.³

I know of no English bugle horn or drinking horn which was once a tenure horn that has come in later ages to be thought of fairy origin. But I have a suspicion that the Ballafletcher Cup, now in the Manx Museum at Douglas

¹ Lynn Thorndike *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 1923, vol. II, p. 264.

² Codex Latinus Monacensis 2574 b, bombyc. Thirteenth cent fol. 69v. Steele (p. lviii) however asserts that no manuscript of the *Secret of Secrets* is known in which there occurs the figure of a horn except the Holkham Hall copy which includes an entirely fanciful horn (pl. 151 of the Roxburgh Club edit. 1914).

³ Steele *Secret of Secrets* 1920, p. 151.

was once the emblem of a tenure, the opinions of eminent folk-lorists notwithstanding.

The estate of Kirby, near the Quarter Bridge over the Glas in the Isle of Man, or Braddan, had been in the Middle Ages a house of the Bishops of Sodor and Man and was held from them on the tenure of providing food and lodging for the bishops on their journeys to and from the island. For many generations it belonged to the family of Fletcher, from which circumstance the estate was known locally as Ballafletcher. Like many other landowning families in the island, the Fletchers could boast of a guardian familiar—the Lhiannan-Shee, or “peaceful spirit,” of Ballafletcher; unlike them, they also possessed a crystal goblet, their “luck,” upon the preservation of which the fortunes of the family were believed to depend. The glass was kept in a recess, presumably in the hall at Kirby, and was never used except on Christmas Day and at Easter when it was filled with wine by the head of the family and quaffed by him at one draught to the Lhiannan-Shee.¹

According to tradition this cup had once belonged to Magnus Barefoot, King of Norway and Man, and had been taken by him from the shrine of St Olaf’s tomb which he caused to be opened in 1098 in order to satisfy his curiosity as to the reputedly uncorrupted state of the Saint’s body, buried sixty-eight years before. As the result of this impious action Magnus was warned in a dream that unless he left his kingdom within thirty days he would either lose his life or his realm. He obeyed the Divine command and within the specified time left Norway for ever.

In 1778 the last of the Fletchers died and the cup was purchased by a certain Mr. Robert Caesar who gave it to his niece for safe keeping, and in the belief that “whosoever had the misfortune to break the glass would surely be haunted by the Lhiannan-Shee of Ballafletcher.”² It was she apparently who gave the glass to Colonel Mark Wilks,³ at one time Governor of the Island of St Helena, who owned Kirby in the early years of the nineteenth

¹ Train quoting Oswald’s *Vestigia* says that this ceremony only took place at Christmas.

² H R Oswald *Vestigia*.

³ Train *Isle of Man*, vol II, pp 153-4, quoting a communication from Oswald of July, 1830. Train says that the donor was “an old lady a kinswoman of the house of Fletcher.”

century. The Colonel for security had it placed in a silver-mounted oak box. On his death without male issue in 1831¹ the cup passed to Major Bacon, of Seafield House, at Santon, in the Isle of Man,² in whose possession it was in 1860 when Dr. H. R. Oswald of Douglas made a drawing of it for his *Vestigia*.

A transformation such as I suggest—that is from an ensign of tenure to a fairy goblet—would be by no means surprising. The excessive rarity of drinking cups, indeed of all vessels of glass, in Northern Europe during the greater part of the Middle Ages, and the high cost of the productions of the glass-makers of Venice and Byzantium, Damascus, Aleppo and Cairo inevitably led, outside princely and royal collections, to their being regarded as something, if not actually miraculous, at least as objects of the greatest curiosity. These “pots de voirre . . . à la façon de Damas,” “coupes de voire peint à la Moresque” were deemed worthy of the acceptance of kings, or held as most precious possessions of cathedral treasuries. And they were frequently credited with a marvellous origin or became associated with the name of some great figure of antiquity. To an Oriental cup, once in the Cathedral Treasury at Chartres and now in the Hôtel de Ville, is attached the story that it was a gift from Haroun al Rashid to Charlemagne.

Even the material of which these cups were made was endowed with a marvellous character. The famous Sacro Cattino, which was at various times described as a gift from Sheba to Solomon, the charger on which the Head of St John the Baptist was served up, the Dish used at the Last Supper and the Holy Grail, was popularly believed to have been cut from one gigantic emerald; while the blue cup of Monza was thought to be a sapphire.

Belief in the supposedly marvellous character of this enamelled oriental glass work was further encouraged by the circumstance that it was in vessels of this type that earth from the Holy Land was brought to Europe for preservation as objects of veneration in the great cathedrals.

¹ He had one daughter, Laura, by his first wife, she married Major-General Sir John Buchan of Kelloch, Berwickshire.

² Oswald *Vestigia*. William Harrison in his notes to Waldron's *Description*, 1865, merely repeats Oswald.

Two vases of the type generally described as Arab lamps, in the Imperial Collection at Vienna, still contain sacred earth.

It would perhaps be unwise to hazard the suggestion that magical properties were ever attributed to these glass vials. But the line of demarcation between relics in their subsidiary characters of charms and phylacteries, and talismans is often very shadowy. And such vials must to the mediæval worshipper have been forceful reminders of the malpractices recalled by the Abbé Villers¹—"We need only close up a glassful of conglobated air, water, or earth, and expose it to the sun one month; then separate the elements according to art. 'Tis wondrous what a magnetic quality each of these purified elements has to attract nymphs, sylphs and gnomes. Take but ever so small a dose every day, and you will see the republick of sylphs fluttering in the air, the nymphs making to the banks in shoals, and the gnomes, the guardians of wealth, spreading forth their treasures"

Scottish tenure horns are also known. After the forfeiture of the office of hereditary forester of the Forest of Drum by the Walchopes in 1306, the forestership was granted by the Bruce to the Burnetts (then Burnards) of Leys in Kincardine. In 1324 the family received from the King several charters of lands in Aberdeenshire, including Killenach-Clerach and other lands within the Forest, then newly-converted into a royal park. Within a short space, however, Alexander Burnett resigned the keepership and its privileges to William Irvine of Drum, receiving in return from the Bruce a charter of the lands of the two Cardneys. The charter and the Horn of the Forest of Drum, which it is said the Burnetts kept as a symbol of their tenure, are still in the possession of the family, now represented by Major-General Sir James Lauderdale Gilbert Burnett, Bart., at Crathes Castle, near Aberdeen; and the forester's horn also makes an appearance in their arms.

This Horn, which is known both as the Leys Tenure Horn and the Crathes Tenure Horn, is of faceted ivory mounted with silver-gilt, the mouthpiece fashioned as a boar's head.² It appears to be of a much later date

¹ Abbé Villers. *Comte de Gabalis—entretiens* 2d, *Chiave del Gabinetto*, etc., p. 28.

² Daniel Wilson. *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, vol. II, p. 501 and pl. xxv.

than that ascribed to it and does not seem to be Scottish but rather continental. The green silk baldric and tassel which support it are of the seventeenth or possibly eighteenth century.

At a later date one of the Burnetts married into the family of Blackhall, of Blackhall, in which the forestership of the Earldom of the Garioch was hereditary, and the horn very possibly may be a symbol of the latter office.¹

The majority of Scottish tenures, of which traces have survived to the present day, are modified by an additional circumstance. Relics of the Celtic Church have always been deeply venerated in Scotland. And the honour attaching to the guardianship of the most sacred of these led in many cases to the creation of special offices with lands and emoluments attached. The ensign, therefore, of the tenure, instead of being given as evidence of the fact, was itself a precious relic on the secure custody of which possession of the lands which accompanied it was dependant. In these circumstances the change in the character of the visible witness to the transaction between the lord and his tenant must the more swiftly have taken place. The original circumstances need not have been forgotten for the change to come about, since the evidence of the tenure already possessed all the attributes of a relic, among which was that of bringing fortune to its possessor and the amuletic property of healing the sick, both man and beast.

Even the most exalted in the land did not disdain to become custodiers of these relics. The care of the Sacred Bell of St. Kessog and of the Sacred Bell of St. Lolan were among the offices at one time held by the Earls of Perth,

¹ A tenure horn of the same ugly outline and furnished with a baldric and tassel of the same type as that attached to the Crathes horn is associated with the Forest of Delamere (ill in vol. II of Ormerod's *Cheshire*). This from the shape of the mounts cannot be dated earlier than about 1500 and may be a quarter of a century later. The black horn of which it is fashioned is not English and the gold mounts are German in feeling.

A similarly mounted horn of this rather unusual shape and suspended from a silken sash appears in the portrait of Sir Thomas Jervoise (b. 1587) painted about 1610 (*The Ancestor*, vol. III, (1902), pl. opp. p. 6). Sir Thomas was appointed Keeper of the Little Park, at Richmond, in 1644, and married Lucy Powlett, whose arms, 3 *swords meeting in point*, impale his own. The horn must be that of some other Keepership as the portrait is a good thirty years earlier than the date of his appointment.

and are referred to as recently as 1675.¹ And the name Dewar or Doire, in the Gaelic Deoraid, signifying a wanderer or pilgrim, has been borne by at least two families of custodiers, the Dewars of Monivaird who guarded the Bell of St. Rowan,² and the Doires who cared for the safety of the Crozier of St. Fillan.

Interesting details relative to the preservation of these relics is furnished by *The Airlie Papers*,³ among which is to be found a formal resignation of the Bell of St. Maddan by its hereditary guardian, Michael David, to Sir John Ogilvy, who in his turn transferred the duty to his wife Margaret, Countess of Moray, on June 27th, 1447. In the same collection may be read "the instrument of sessyn of the bell" dated twenty-one days later, from which it appears that the advantages to be gained by this custody were very substantial. The Countess was by this document put in possession of a house or toft near the church of Luntrethen, which pertained to the Bell, and of which the latter formed both the title and evidence of tenure. The "instrument of sessyn" further describes the formal ceremony of investiture, the Countess being shut up in the house alone, after receiving the feudal symbols of resignation of the property by the delivery to her of earth and stone.

The wardership and seemingly the right to bear the ancient crozier of St. Moloc, more generally known as the Bachuill More or "big staff," before the bishops of Argyle was hereditary, and conferred upon its holders the popular title of Barons of Bachuill, together with the possession of a small freehold estate in the vicinity of the Cathedral of Lismore which remained in their possession until the middle of last century. The original charter of confirmation grants,

"Dilecto signiffero nostro Johanni M'Molmore vic Kevir, et heredibus suis masculis de suo corpore legitime procreatis seu procreandis quibus deficientibus ad nostram donationem reuerten. omnes et singulas nostras terras de dimidietate terrarum de Peynebachillen et Peynehallen extenden.

¹ Inquis, ad Capet Dom Regis Retornatum Perth, NN 708, 880—cited by Wilson *Prehistoric Annals*, vol. II, p. 469

² *Arch. Scot.*, vol. II, p. 75

³ *Airlie Papers—Spalding Miscellany*, vol. IV, pp. 117-118.

ad dimidiatem merce terrarum jacen. in Insula de Lismor, cum custodia magni bacculi beati Moloci ”¹

The estates Peynebachill and Peynehall were held under this deed granted by the Earl of Argyle in 1544, the crozier being preserved in verification of the right until it was, about 1850, delivered up in return for new titles, in order to enable the late owner, the last of his race, to dispose of the freehold which could no longer descend to his heirs.

The Bachuill More consists of a plain curved staff with a crook handle, long since despoiled of its enrichments, and retaining only a few of the rivets and some fragments of its metal casing.

¹ *Reliq Antiq Scot*, xxv, p. 150. See also *Orig Paroch*, vol. II, p. 163, *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, II, p. 12.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOTHICK REVIVAL

THE last quarter of the sixteenth century felt the first warning tremors of the Gothick Revival in this country. Until the publication of Mr. J. G. Mann's recent paper upon some unusual aspects of this most interesting manifestation¹, the sole angle from which it has been viewed has been the literary one: an angle which, however, only takes in that harmless prospect which leads up to and culminates in Dryden's *Heroick Tragedies*. In other aspects this revival became, and, were not criticism so penetrating, would still be dangerous to scholarship. It was a period of forgeries in architecture and sculpture, in history and painting. It was the age of forged pedigrees, the branches of which put forth names as false as the arms with which they were associated.

The representatives of the new landowning class, created by the Tudors to keep themselves in countenance and endowed by their despotic sovereigns with estates erected from the ruins of the monasteries, were like most other *parvenus* desirous to furnish themselves not only with ancestors, but with all the other trappings of antiquity. And in the venal heralds of the day they found aiders and abettors, willing in return for money or patronage to supply them with all that they might require in the way of ancestors, heraldry and romantic legends.

The earliest manifestation of this revived Gothick spirit would appear to be the portraits of the Lumleys in Lumley Castle and the Lumley effigies in the church at Chester-le-Street, Durham. a heterogeneous collection of genuine sculptures appropriated, or palimpsest effigies and frank

¹ J. G. Mann: "Instances of Antiquarian Feeling in Mediæval and Renaissance Art"—*Archæological Journal*, vol. lxxxix (1933), pp. 254-274.

forgeries brought together or carved or painted about 1585 to the order of John, Lord Lumley (d. 1609), who, considering that he was a lawyer, should have known better. The whole collection was assembled for the glorification of his family.

This and many similar collections of "ancestors"¹ were, however, harmless and easily forgiven vanities, that can scarcely have taken in even the fairly gullible contemporaries of those whose complacency they flattered. But the practice became dangerous and a menace to knowledge when this retrospective portraiture was deliberately used to furnish evidence in support of family traditions or to bolster up claims to honours or distinctions.² Lord Lumley was guilty of this malpractice when he had the famous Richard II portrait, now at Westminster, copied, and so altered that it shewed the King in the act of "delyvering the wryte of Parliament to Ralphe the first Barron of Lumley, called by him the eight yeare of his Reigne."³ The fact that the presentment of Ralph is actually a portrait of Lord Lumley himself cannot have materially lessened the deceitfulness of such a painting.

On the Continent in the twilight of the Middle Ages the collecting proclivities of Jean, Duc de Berri, and the romantic enthusiasms of René of Provence and Kaiser Max, the last of the Knights Errant, foreshadowed the scientific interest in antiquity which culminated in the stupendous museum of armour, portraits and curiosities brought together in the second half of the sixteenth century by the Archduke Ferdinand of the Tyrol at the Castle of Ambras. Side by side with this revived concern for the habiliments and other intimate mementoes of the great figures of the past flourished a newly-awakened curiosity in the written memorials of the Dark Ages, such as Jornandes' *De Rebus Gothorum*, and Paulus Diaconus' *De Gestis Longobardorum*, published by Peutinger at Augsburg in

¹ See Frederick Chancellor *The Ancient Sepulchral Monuments of Essex*, 1890, pls lvi-lx, and Ormerod *History of Cheshire*, vol iii, pl op p 87.

² For example the painting of *John de la Bere receiving his Crest from Edward the Black Prince* engraved by T Bonner for Ralph Bigland's *History of the County of Gloucester*, i, 1791, pl. op p 312. It was then in the possession of Mr John de la Bere, of Cheltenham. In the early part of 1929 it was in the hands of Messrs Spink & Son.

³ Lumley Inventory of 1590 p. 328. See also J. R. Planché in *J.B.A.A.*, vol. xxi, p 36.

1515. And with this knowledge came an appreciation of the beliefs of these old peoples. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, to discover occasional traces at this period of a renewed interest in family talismans derived from fairy sources.

In 1599 H. Hamelmann published his *Oldenburgisch Chronicon*, wherein he gave form and substance to the legend, and one of very recent manufacture, relating to the Horn of Oldenburg, which he asserted had been the talisman of the Counts of Oldenburg since the days of Count Otto, who flourished in the tenth century.¹ But a few years earlier, in 1595, the Norwegian Bishop, Jens Nilsson, upon one of his periodical perambulations of his diocese had met with another talismanic horn in the parish of Fladal in Telemarken.² And despite the rapid strides made in the study of natural science during the latter part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries these and similar legends met with a ready acceptance.

King James, the British Solomon, knew something of these fairy gifts, and was frankly sceptical of their supposed origin. In the guise of *Epistemon* he set forth his rationalistic attitude in his *Daemonologie*, his partner in the dialogue, *Philomathes*, representing the credulous attitude of the average man. To *Philomathes'* assertion that—"sundrie Witches haue gone to death with that confession, that they haue been transported with the Phairie to such a hill, which opening, they went in, and there saw a faire Queene, who being now lighter gave them a stone that had sundrie vertues, which at sundrie times hath bene produced in judgement," His Majesty replied, "May not the deuell object to their fantasie, their senses being dulled, and as it were a sleepe, such hilles and houses within them, such glistening courts and traines, and whatsoeuer such like wherewith he pleaseth to delude them. And in the meane time their bodies being senseless, to conuay in their hande any stone or such like thing, which he makes them to imagine to haue receiued in such a place."

It is strange to find James prepared to accept a personal devil capable and willing to hoodwink his dupes with tricks and yet unable to accept his angels.

¹ See Chapter XIII.

² See Chapter XIII

It is impossible to trace any of the Anglo-Celtic legends of talismanic cups, in general supposedly of fairy origin, beyond the close of the seventeenth century. John Aubrey recounts the strange circumstances by which the family of Lord Duffus is supposed to have become possessed of their Silver Cup, which would seem to have achieved something of the character of a talisman, though Aubrey himself makes no mention of this reputation.¹ Since the cup is no longer in existence—or so inquiries would lead me to believe—speculation about its exact period and any attempt to rationalize the story of Lord Duffus' wild ride with a coven of witches through the air from Scotland to the cellars of the King of France would be in vain. But the legend at least proves that tales of this nature had become attached to the more precious possessions of some ancient families by the middle of the seventeenth century. Another cup, still fortunately surviving, to which is attached the familiar curse that "its breakage would be followed by dire misfortune in the family", belongs to the family of Dundas of Arniston in Mid-Lothian.² No supernatural origin is claimed in this case, and the circumstance that not only is the cup of the period claimed for it, but that the legend is an old established one, tempts us to accept the story as substantially correct and to place its origin in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

"Katie Oliphant's wineglass," as the Dundas Luck is commonly entitled, is a sixteenth century Venetian glass cup which belonged to Katherine Oliphant, daughter of Laurence, third Lord Oliphant, and the wife of George Dundas of Dundas, who flourished—literally—in the second half of the sixteenth century. It was to this lady's capabilities as a manager that her husband's prosperity was in a great part due, and to her must be ascribed the purchase of the Lands of Arniston that later came to her younger son Sir James Dundas (b. 1570), the first of Arniston, Governor of Berwick, in the reign of King James VI. and I. According to one version of the legend she gave her cup to James Dundas together with Arniston and the warning that any damage to the cup or its loss would inevitably be followed

¹ *Miscellanies*, edit 1826, p. 149, quoting a correspondent writing March 25th, 1695

² George W. T. Omond: *The Arniston Memoirs*, 1887, pp. 2 and 3.

by disaster.¹ Certainly the cup still exists, and it is equally certain that the Dundases of Arniston have thriven amazingly and obtained much honour during the last three centuries. Five heads of the family have attained during that period to the position of supreme head of the judicature of Scotland, a distinction achieved by no other family in the Northern Kingdom.²

Katie Oliphant would appear to have been one of those people in whom intense family pride is the ruling passion, who desire above all else to know that the things for which they have striven, that they have made to come to pass, shall endure for all time and shall be for ever linked with their names. Anne Griffith was another of this one-ideaed band, and she took an unusual way to ensure that her kinsfolk, if not her descendants—for she was never married—should always inhabit Burton Agnes Hall, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the house to which she had devoted many years of her life. She at least should never be forgotten by those who lived there. Before she died as the result of a wayside encounter with a footpad she asked that her head should be cut off and always kept in the Hall. Failure to comply with her request would, she assured her sisters, result in her ghost making the lives of those residing in the building unbearable. And it would appear to be well attested that the screaming skull of this otherwise well-mannered young lady has proved itself to be highly temperamental on the occasions when any attempt has been made to remove it to a spot more suitable to the preservation of these relics of mortality. The same spirit would seem to have actuated George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, who died on January 29th, 1735, a fortnight after his wife. And presentation to the mummified bodies of My Lord and My Lady in the vault of St. Clement Danes would appear to have long been a necessary part of the ceremony of inducting the clerk of the parish.

A number of other instances of the preservation of these grim relics might be cited, and most of them can be traced back to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries.

¹ *Notes and Queries*, S XI, vol. IV, p. 436, quoting the *Northamptonshire Herald*, January 1st, 1909.

² Almost a talismanic character would seem to have been attributed to the Cup of the Honywoods once of Marks Hall, Essex. (See Thomas Wright. *The History . . . of the County of Essex*, 1831-1837, vol. I, p. 377.

But with the exception of the skull of Burton Agnes Hall they can scarcely be regarded as Lucks, since they fail in that essential of a luck which must in general bind the family and the place together. They at least, however, serve to illustrate the spirit that led to a revival in the interest in such talismans during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

With the closing years of the seventeenth century matters became yet worse, the "Gothick" disease yet more virulent. The Lees of Ditchley and others with a careless disregard for the past might sell their ancestral armour by the hundred-weight at so much a pound. But antiquaries like Dugdale were wandering the country noting and cataloguing its antiquities, while folk-lorists, like John Aubrey, intent upon his projected comedy, *The Country Revel*, were prepared to make long and wearisome journeys merely to "collect the gothucisimes and clounrys" of the provinces,¹ gathering into their notebooks strange tales of witches and fairies, malefic trees, of strange portents, and of unlucky mansions.

On the Continent their brother enthusiasts were doing much the same. In 1621 Philip Camerarius' collection of strange stories, superstitions, omens and presages was translated into English under the title of the *Living Librarie*, to be followed in 1666 by Praetorius' *Anthropodemus Plutonicus*, with its store of quaint tales. And in 1693 appeared Jacob Wolff's *Curtiosus Amuletorum Scrutator*. These and such native productions as John Gaule's *Mag-Astro-Mancer* must have been well known to the antiquaries of the day. And it only required the very wide popularity enjoyed by Wharton's *The Drinking Match* and the very general acceptance of the Luck of Edenhall as an authentic fairy talisman to breed a spirit of emulation among the Border families. And during the latter part of the eighteenth century a number of other "lucks" made their appearance. But of these one only can lay any claim to an antiquity approaching that of the Luck of Edenhall or can be considered a talisman, at least in the sense in which the Luck of Edenhall may be accepted as such.

One of the earliest of these "lucks" made its appearance in the family of the Earls of Dartmouth, who were closely allied by marriage to the Musgraves of Edenhall. A second

¹ John Aubrey *Brief Lives*, edit. Andrew Clark, 1898, vol. II, p. 326.

was created by the Lambs, who for many generations owned the farm of Burrell Green, near Great Salkeld, and three and a half miles north-east of Penrith. They owned a brazen dish which was said to have been given to an ancestor at that vague and remote period referred to as "the olden time," either by a witch or by one of those household familiars known as "Hob-i-th'hurst," to whom some kindness had been shewn, with the warning or "curse" engraved about the central boss of the dish,

"If this dish be sold or gi'en
Farewell the luck of Burrell Green."

The Lambs no longer own Burrell Green, but when they sold the property the dish remained in the farm and is I believe there to this day.

Though the dish itself, which is 16½ inches in diameter and two inches deep, is of considerable interest and antiquity, as a luck it is of recent manufacture. The curse is obviously based on that associated with the Luck of Edenhall and it would therefore seem not to have been engraved earlier than the first printed appearance of the Edenhall legend in 1791.

Not to be outdone by their near neighbours the Musgraves, the Lambs would appear to have dug out from the family plate chest this sixteenth century brazen alms-dish on which they caused the "curse" to be engraved in Roman capitals of a very late type and entirely out of harmony with the original black letter inscription, which runs—*Mary . Mother . of . Jesus . Saviour . of . Men.*¹

The Curwens of Workington Hall, in Cumberland, possess a cup supposed to have been given to Sir Henry Curwen by Mary, Queen of Scots.² Fleeing from Langside she landed at Workington on Sunday, May 16th, 1568, and when she left for Cockermouth and Carlisle, she presented her host, her distant kinsman, with a small

¹ William Whellan *The History and Topography of the Countres of Cumberland and Westmorland*, 1860, p. 622. In 1847 the dish was owned by Mr. John Lamb of Burrell Green (Mannix and Whellan *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Cumberland*, 1847, p. 306). In 1897 the farm was occupied by Mr. Joseph Hodgson. The most complete account of the "Luck of Burrell Green", yet meagre withal, is given by Llewellynn Jewitt (*The Lucks of Muncaster and Burrell Green—The Reliquary*, vol. xx (1879-1880), pp. 133-138).

² William Whellan *The History . . of Cumberland and Westmorland*, pp. 469-470.

agate cup with the words, "Luck to Workington," together with a portrait of herself and a small brass clock. This cup the family promoted from the rank of a relic of the Queen to that of a family talisman—the Luck of Workington. It may be noted that Sir Henry's son and heir, Sir Nicholas, married as his first wife, Anne, daughter of Sir Simon Musgrave of Edenhall.

It was left, however, to the Penningtons of Mulcaster, or Muncaster, to carry the matter farthest, though the germ of the episode seems to have been planted much earlier, and to have had its source in the relic-collecting habits of our ancestors. For the Luck of the Penningtons, upon the preservation of which was supposed to have depended the fortunes of the family for more than four and a half centuries, is said to be the Cup of King Henry VI.¹

According to the tradition current in the family, it was either after Towton in 1461, or more probably after Hexham in 1464, that King Henry came a fugitive, his crown and kingdom lost, deserted by his kindred and allies, to Muncaster Castle in Cumberland, hard by St. Michael's Ford across the River Usk.

Henry had made his way into Cumberland with only one companion. At Ireton Hall, where he had arrived soon after midnight, he was denied admittance, and he pressed on over the mountains towards Muncaster where he felt sure of a welcome. Near the castle on a slight eminence now marked by a steeple-like monument, about three in the morning, he came upon a party of shepherds who conducted him to Muncaster.² The then Lord of Muncaster was old Sir John Pennington, a kinsman of the great house of Percy, whose arms he bore with a difference, a stout forayer across the Borders, and a man who had already earned the stern disapproval of the supporters of Edward of York by reason of "certain riots and mis-governances in Yorkshire" for which they held him responsible.³ Under the protection of this turbulent

¹ The last Lord Muncaster died in 1917. Muncaster Castle and the Luck are now the properties of Sir John Ramsden, Bart., whose father was cousin to the last Lord Muncaster.

² White is responsible for the preservation of this part of the legend (J. P. White, *Lays and Legends of the Lake Country*, p. 149).

³ Nicholas, *Proceedings of the Privy Council*, v, p. 271.

knight and within the huge walls of Agricola's Tower at Muncaster, Henry sought and found temporary sanctuary.¹ When the King departed he called Sir John to him and placed in his hands "a brauve workyd Glasse Cuppe" of pale green glass enriched with gilding and white and lilac enamel. The gift was accompanied by his "rede"—so says the inscription upon Sir John's tomb—that "whyllys the famylie shold keep hit [the Cup] unbrecken thei shold gratelye thrif, and never lack a male heir, whyche Cuppe is kalled the Lucke of Molcastre."²

According to John Roby, the Lancashire folk-lorist, the King's Cup was of an even more exalted origin for,

"In the church of the Holy Sepulchre
This crystal once did rest;

And many a martyr, and many a saint,
Around its brim have sate;
No water that e'er its lips have touched
But is hallowed and consecrate.

'Tis thine, Sir; not an empire's worth,
Nor wealth of Ind could buy
The like, for never was jewel seen
Of such wondrous potency.

It shall bless thy bed, it shall bless thy board,
They shall prosper by this token;
In Muncaster Castle good-luck shall be,
Till the charmed cup be broken!"

With these words—or others of the same import—Henry departed from Muncaster upon the first stage of his journey southwards into Lancashire, a journey that was to end, after a brief return to kingship, in imprisonment, insanity and death.

Henry's Cup is not, however, the only memorial of the King's sojourn at Muncaster preserved in the Castle. In King Henry's bedroom are the four posts of his bed bearing

¹ Henry lay concealed for some time at Bolton Hall, in Yorkshire. After Hexham he is said to have spent twelve months in hiding with friends in Lancashire.

² I use the version given by Jefferson *History and Antiquities of Cumberland* 1842, vol. II, p. 230 note.

his crowned cypher, and on the wall hangs his portrait painted on panel, wherein the artist has portrayed him kneeling before an altar with the Cup in his hands.¹

Good fortune, as Henry had foretold, followed his Cup. Wealth and some honours came to the owners of Muncaster in the centuries that followed. Penningtons crossed the Narrow Seas and fought in Bluff Hal's French wars, or forayed over the Borders in the Scottish wars of Edward VI. And wise marriages added largely to their estates in Westmorland and Yorkshire. It was William Pennington (1590-1652), however, who added most considerably to the family fortunes by opening ironworks at Cockermouth in Cumberland, though he nearly beggared himself and his family by taking the King's side in the Great Rebellion. He was threatened with the sequestration of his property, and his son, Joseph (1615-1658), who had served the King in both the first and second Civil Wars, was fined for delinquency. Neither lived to see the Restoration, and it was Joseph's son, William, born in 1655, who, at the age of twenty-one, was rewarded for his father's and grandfather's sacrifices with a baronetcy. Sir William added still further to the family estates for his marriage with Isabel, daughter of John Stapleton of Warter, or Warke, a member of the same family from which the "Luck of Edenhall" had once come, brought that manor to the Penningtons. The second baronet held the remunerative office of comptroller of the cash of the excise, an office that his son, Sir John, the third baronet, also enjoyed. And the latter's son, another John, on October 21st, 1783, was created Baron Muncaster in the Peerage of Ireland, an honour that in 1898 was enlarged to a barony of the United Kingdom.

Though the Luck of Muncaster brought fortune to the owners of Muncaster, its beneficent influence did not seemingly extend to the junior branches of the family. Sir Isaac Pennington, high sheriff and Lord Mayor of

¹ An outline drawing of this painting is given by Jewitt (*The Reliquary*, vol. xx, p. 137). A second painting depicting King Henry giving the Cup to Sir John Pennington on his departure from the Castle used to hang on the grand staircase at Muncaster. This however made no pretensions to antiquity (William Whellan *Cumberland and Westmorland*, p. 490). Jewitt was informed by the then Lord Muncaster that this picture had been destroyed during some recent alterations to the building.

London, Colonel of the White Regiment of Trained Bands, regicide and Lieutenant of the Tower, died a ruined man in that grim fortress in 1660, and his eldest son, the Quaker Isaac, spent much of his life in prison. Even Sir John Pennington, who served as vice-admiral under Raleigh on the ill-fated Orinoco expedition of 1617, died all but a beggar though Lord High Admiral of England.

Only once during four hundred and fifty years has the Luck of Muncaster been in serious danger. When the Civil War broke out between King Charles and his unfaithful Commons, William Pennington, then master of Muncaster, buried the Cup in some secret place. When peace once more reigned it was disinterred from its temporary grave, but the person to whom this task was delegated—the owner of Muncaster, William Pennington, was only a boy at the time—let the casket in which the talisman was, fall, and so horrified the family that for more than forty years, so says tradition, no Pennington, could be persuaded to open the box to discover whether the Luck were shattered or not. At last, however, came a Pennington more hardy or more sceptical of such legends than others, who opened the box and was able to proclaim that the Cup was still entire.¹

The legend of the Luck of Muncaster is a good, well-rounded legend; but it has one great weakness. Though the Luck of Muncaster yet remains unbroken the Penningtons of Muncaster are no more. Josslyn Francis, the fifth and last Baron Muncaster, died on March 30th, 1917, his brother Alan Joseph having died before him in 1913. Moreover, looking with the somewhat jaundiced eye of the antiquary at the concrete evidence preserved at Muncaster, which purports to establish both Henry's residence under the roof of Sir John Pennington and his ownership of the Cup, it is seen to possess faults in the highest degree damaging to its credit. King Henry may have given his Cup to Sir John Pennington as tradition relates; but the Cup is certainly no chalice from the Holy Sepulchre; it is a fifteenth century Venetian bowl. We must not, however, stress this circumstance over much, for Roby's romantic imaginings had no place in what we may call the original legend. But the King's portrait and the tomb

¹ This incident, conceivably true, is stated by Jewitt to have occurred during the Wars of the Roses.

of Sir John Pennington, the King's protector, in the Church of St Michael at Muncaster, whereon in language of the finest "Gothick" vintage the legend of the Luck appears, are both unquestionably productions of the last decade of the eighteenth century.

The tomb and its inscription are generally admitted to have been produced to the order of Sir John Pennington, the first Lord Muncaster, who died in 1813. Such was his strange way of doing honour to the memory of his ancestor. But I am unaware that the comparative antiquity of the portrait has hitherto been seriously called in question. Indeed on general grounds I should have been tempted to believe it a production of those venal artists who supplied Lord Lumley and his contemporaries with ancestral portraits at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. But the evidence that it is of a much later date is perfectly clear.

Somewhere about 1780 Mr (afterwards Sir) John Fenn, F S A., the earliest editor of the Paston Letters, became possessed of an old drawing, apparently executed in the latter part of the fifteenth century, depicting one of the Adoring Magi from some lost window or triptych. The Magus was represented in a kneeling attitude, lifting the cover from a vase of spices with his left hand. Either because it was stated to be so or because the devices of the Houses of York and Lancaster and of many of their adherents, which were pasted upon the same sheet of paper, led Fenn to believe it, he came to the conclusion that the kneeling figure was a presentment of King Henry VI. And when in 1787 he published the Paston Letters he commissioned T. Cook to make an engraving of this drawing to be used as the frontispiece to the first volume.¹

The resemblance between the kneeling figure of the King in the portrait at Muncaster and the kneeling "Henry VI." of Cook's plate is too close to be due to coincidence. We must either believe that some hypothetical artist of the sixteenth century made use of the window or triptych from which Fenn's sketch was made, or that Cook's engraving was utilized by some late eighteenth century forger for the basis of his "portrait" of King

¹*Original Letters written in the Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III.,* five vols., 1787-1823, edited by John Fenn, F S A.

Henry. There are, however, some minor differences between the two presentments of the King. The Luck of Muncaster has been substituted for the vase of spices and placed in the King's left hand, while the right has been raised in the act of benediction, an altar has been added, and some very minor alterations in the dress have been made. But substantially they are the same.

Whether this forgery was perpetrated with the knowledge and under the direction of Lord Muncaster, or whether he was merely the victim of some cunning fabricator we shall probably never know. But his responsibility for the inscription upon the Pennington tomb is not denied, and one who could countenance this piece of charlatanry is scarcely likely to have bogled at a portrait.¹

In the circumstances it seems scarcely worth while to consider whether the bedposts of the King's bed, with their specious crowns and cyphers are antique or not. At all events they cannot be earlier than the late sixteenth century.

To rebuild the castle of his forbears, which had fallen into sad decay by reason of the family's long residence at Warter was right and proper of him; to convert the modest remnant of this castle into a feudal castle was understandable; to erect memorials in the Church at Muncaster setting forth the deeds and qualities of his ancestors was an act of piety; but to give form and body to a nebulous legend of more than doubtful antiquity in such a way that it should deceive all with its then specious appearance of authenticity, was unpardonable in one who in his other actions won merited approbation.

It is to be feared, however, that it was envy of his neighbours and very distant kinsmen, the Musgraves of Edenhall,² that led to Lord Muncaster's lapse, and to his surrender to the influence of the Gothick Revival.

A few years after the death of the first Lord Muncaster the chain of "evidences" was completed and the seal set upon the so-called legend by the Lancashire folk-lorist,

¹ So obsessed by the Gothic spirit of the period was the first Baron that he had his son, who died before him, christened Gamel de Pennington.

² The Penningtons were distant cousins to the Musgraves. One Nicholas Musgrave married a daughter of Piers-Jeffrey Tilhol, whose wife was descended from Robert Pennington de Mulcaster the younger, who married the daughter and heiress of John de Hayton.

John Roby. No doubt inspired by J. H. Wiffen's romantic ballad of *The Luck of Edenhall*, which had appeared in 1826, he produced between 1829 and 1831 for his second series of *Traditions of Lancashire*¹ the ballad of *The Luck of Muncaster*

"Sir John he bent him on his knee,
And the King's word ne'er did err,
For the cup is called, to this blessed hour
'The Luck of Muncaster'."

This ballad was included among Roby's Lancashire traditions because the Penningtons came originally from Pennington in that county. Whatever merits Roby may have possessed as a romantic balladist, he was a bad historian and a worse antiquary and genealogist. He was under the impression that the Rose of Lancaster was the white rose, which—

" . . . withers on every bough,
And the red rose rears its thorn,"

and he asserts that Sir John Pennington received his peerage in 1793.

"King Henry's Cup" is not, however, the only object for which the distinction of being the Luck of Muncaster has been claimed. Hartshorne describes and illustrates a glass beaker in the possession of Mr Thomas Clutterbuck for which this claim has also been made.² It is a deep cylindrical glass of horny tinted metal painted with the figures of two shepherds and adorned with inscriptions in French. From the costumes depicted on this and on other glasses apparently emanating from the same factory it would appear to be about 1560 or 1570.³ It is said to have left Muncaster in 1756 on the marriage of Elizabeth Pennington to Farrer Wren, from whom it descended to Charles Lyon, of Binchester, who bequeathed it to Mr Clutterbuck.

An unprejudiced examination of the facts and probabilities would seem to show that the first Baron Muncaster

¹ John Roby. *Traditions of Lancashire*, 1831, vol. 1, pp. 151-163.

² A. Hartshorne. *Old English Glasses*, pp. 140 and 141, and pl. 24.

³ Both Hartshorne, and W. Buckley and B. Rackham (*European Glass*, no. 22) date this glass and others like it as about 1520 despite the conclusive evidence of the costumes.

did not invent the legend of the Cup. Its association with the names of King Henry and Sir John Pennington had probably been long established when Lord Muncaster endowed it with circumstance. And if there is any truth in the story attached to the Clutterbuck beaker, the belief that some such object was the Luck of Muncaster would seem to have existed before 1756. In some form or another the tradition was probably in existence long before Lord Muncaster's time. And a study of similar English-Scottish traditions would suggest that the story of King Henry's Cup first took shape probably towards the end of the seventeenth century. John Aubrey's search for strange tales did much to encourage the revival of belief in fairy cups and talismans. And personally I should be tempted to see the germ of this story in the association of William Pennington (d. 1683), uncle to Sir William, the first baronet, with Lilly, the astrologer, to whom the former was "the most munificent Patron and ever-bountiful Friend."

Lord Muncaster did no more than carry on the work begun by others before him. The cult of "St Henry" had flourished amazingly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Red Rose Catholic counties of the North.¹ And Lord Muncaster did no more than endow the "relic", real or supposed, of the martyred King with the character of a family talisman. In order to provide chapter and verse for his exalted claim, to establish beyond question this "relic's" connexion with the saintly Henry, and to kill at birth any doubts of the authenticity of the "legend" attached to the Pennington Cup which might germinate in the minds of sceptics, he commissioned the manufacture of other "relics" and evolved the corroborative inscription upon Sir John's newly-erected tomb. In his attempts to glorify his ancestors he did no worse than his contemporaries who were guilty of vandalism, in the eyes of the antiquary a far more heinous crime.

¹ For example the seventeenth century boots and gloves, and the early spoon of King Henry VI in the Mayer Collection in Liverpool Museum. These were for long the most cherished possessions of the Waddingtons of Waddington Hall, near Clitheroe, in Lancashire. The "pen-case" said to have been left by the King at Waddington Hall was lent by Lord Zouche to the Monarchs of Great Britain and Ireland Exhibition in 1901-2 (*Catalogue*, no. 316—illustrated in *The Reliquary*, vol. vi, (1892) p. 9.)

What may possibly have enjoyed for a short period the reputation of a family luck was a sword that in the middle of the eighteenth century was preserved at Armethwaite Castle, the home of the Skeltons, on the River Eden, not far from Edenhall. It bore upon its blade rudely incised and inlaid the potent name of *Edward Prins Anglie*. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, before January, 1794, it passed into the possession of the Hull antiquary, Wallis, and in Wallis' Museum it remained until the collection was obtained for the Museum at Kingston-upon-Hull where, I understand, it now is. Whatever exalted claims may have been made for this weapon in the past—Nicholson and Burn asserted that it was the sword of Edward I.—the blade cannot claim a greater antiquity than the middle of the seventeenth century, while the brass hilt is of a characteristic English fashion of about 1710–1720.

CHAPTER VII

THE LUCK OF EDENHALL

"God prosper long from being broke
The *Luck of Edenhall*."

The Drinking Match.

THE Luck of Edenhall is the paragon of Lucks. There exist other fanuly talismans which possess more ancient histories, to which more extravagant and romantic legends cling and which would seem more fully to have justified their title. But none has ever achieved the celebrity of the Luck of the Musgraves, a celebrity founded strangely enough not upon the exquisite beauty of the object itself nor upon the dramatic quality of the traditions that should be attached to it, but upon the drunken frolic of a toss-pot duke, and upon the doggerel verse in which he saw fit to immortalize his debauch. Since that long forgotten occasion when had it not been for a servant's deftness, Philip, Duke of Wharton, had shattered in his inebriety the Luck of his cousin, Sir Christopher Musgrave of Edenhall, many pens have paid honour to this precious goblet. It has been celebrated both in prose and verse more often than any other glass in the world. It has even added if not a new word to the English language, at least a new sense to an old one. For the word *luck* in the sense of a talisman or charm was unknown in the seventeenth century. John Gaule is prolific of the names by which talismans held efficacious "in curing diseases, and preventing perils" were known in his day "*Pericaptis (sic), Amulets, Praefiscenals, Phylacteries, Niceteries, Ligatures, Suspenseons, Charmes and Spels*"¹—he knows them all, but "lucks" he does not know.

¹ John Gaule ἡὺς-μαρτυρία *The Mag-astro-mancer, or the Magicall-Astrogeall-Divinner Posed, and Puzzled*, 1652, p. 192

And imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, other families have not scorned to ape the Musgraves and to furnish themselves with lucks, possessed of all the romantic trimmings of their prototype and lacking only its authenticity

Edenhall lies in the valley of the Eden, in Cumberland, some few miles south-east of Penrith. The house is comparatively modern and possesses no architectural feature of interest. But there is a good gallery of family portraits, a mediaeval church, and in the grounds a fairy well dedicated to the memory of St. Cuthbert.

In the days of Henry III. the manor of Edenhall was held by one Sweine from whom a certain Robert Turpe obtained it. The Turpes in turn held the manor until the first year of the reign of Edward III. (1327-1328) when William de Stapleton married Juliana, daughter and heiress of another Robert Turpe. The de Stapletons occupied the manor until the middle of the fifteenth century, when Joanna, daughter and co-heiress of Sir William de Stapleton, married Sir Thomas Musgrave, of Hartley Castle, the first Musgrave of Edenhall.

It would be incorrect to say that the Musgraves, despite the circumstance that they, like many other families, claim descent from one of the companions of William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy, have been either a particularly distinguished or a peculiarly successful family. They have, however, held their lands of Edenhall for the better part of five hundred years, they have married well, and they have held under the Crown some offices of importance. And to this extent the Luck of Edenhall may be said to have justified itself. But if the chroniclers have done bare justice to the family the ballad-mongers, when they took a hand in the game, served them well. No Musgrave might ever hope to achieve the celebrity of that gay old freebooter Johnny Armstrong, who at one time bade fair to rival Robin Hood and William of Cloudeslee in popular estimation. But the Musgraves can never say that they were ignored by the minstrels of the Marches. A "little Musgrave" was foot page to John Armstrong when he bade the world his *Last Good Night*.¹ "Sir William Musgrave was stiffe to stand" in

¹ James Maidment *Scottish Ballads*, vol. 1, pp. 130 *et seq.*

Bosworth Feilde Sir Michael Musgrave and Sir John Armstrong were rivals for the love of "the beautiful daughter of Lady Dacre of the North," and "the pleasant ballad" tells "of the great strife that happened between them for her, and how they wrought the death of one hundred men." But of all the Musgraves he that has earned the greatest fame—infamy some would have it—is *The Little Musgrave*, who was moved to lament over the body of his wife and her seducer—

" . I have slaine the fairest sir knight,
That ever rode on a steede,
So have I done the fairest ladye,
That ever ware woman's weede."

If the ballad-mongers and the chroniclers have brought the Musgraves a modicum of fame, their Luck has won for them an immortality that shall live as long as the English language is spoken.

§ 1

THE LUCK

It is certainly remarkable that most of those who have written of, even described, the Luck of Edenhall, have never seen it. Their descriptions are full of the wildest inaccuracies. It was apparently Hutchinson who first stated that the sacred monogram I.H.S., actually on the lid of the case, appeared upon the goblet itself, an assertion that was repeated by John Robert Robinson¹ And the author of the article on the Luck of Edenhall in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* went one better. It is, he says, "an old painted drinking goblet . . . of enamelled or painted glass . . . believed to date from the 10th century. It is of fair size and has the letters I.H.S. on the top. Round the vase is the famous verse. . . .

'When this cup shall break or fall,
Farewell the luck of Eden Hall'."

¹*Philip, Duke of Wharton*, 1896, p. 48

² These lines are obviously based on the fourth verse of Longfellow's translation of Uhland's ballad. The statement that they appear on the cup itself was apparently first made by T. A. Trollope (*What I remember*, 1887 vol. II, p. 37)

And this despite the assertion that the glass is "believed to date from the tenth century."

It is equally depressing to add that this farrago of nonsense is repeated in the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

The Luck of Edenhall, and other goblets of the same type and obviously emanating from the same source, have received considerable critical attention during the last thirty years. It is not my intention to recapitulate all the evidence as to origin adduced by such authorities as Mr. O. M. Dalton and Mr W. B. Honey. Their learned disquisitions are readily accessible to those who may wish to go deeply into the matter. Though certain minor matters may still require clearing up, it may be regarded as established that these goblets are of Syrian workmanship and of the early part of the thirteenth century. The origin and date of the case in which the Luck is kept are less certain.

Mr W. B. Honey was of the opinion that the case was of fourteenth century date and of either English or French origin. He is certainly wrong as to the date, and the balance of probability is distinctly in favour of it being of English make. The suggestion that it is of fifteenth century make was first advanced by Mr. Fitch¹ in 1880. The only serious study of this "cut leather work" has been made by Mr G. D. Hobson in his *English Book-bindings before 1500*.² He is only prepared to accept one of the dozen boxes cited by him, that from the Church of St. Agnes at Cawston, Norfolk, as belonging to the fourteenth century. The remaining examples he describes as of good second class quality and by no means to be compared either with the Cawston box or the finest continental examples. Two of his examples, both heraldically decorated rectangular

¹ In 1880 Mr Samuel Edward Fitch of Willerby, Scarborough, contributed an account of the Luck of Edenhall to the *Scarborough Gazette*, subsequently reprinted in book form. There is no copy of his monograph, in the British Museum. Whenever I have cited Mr Fitch's statements or beliefs, it is to be understood I am quoting from Mr Hartland.

In support of his belief that the case was of the fifteenth century Mr Fitch cited "an inkstand of Henry the Seventh's" of similar make. I do not know of any such stand. It is possible, however, that he referred to a case for writing implements of the early sixteenth century formerly in the Spitzer Collection (*La Collection Spitzer*, 1891, vol. II—*Cuir*, pl. III).

² 1929, Appendix H.

boxes in the Record Office, are dated 1504; but here the decoration is slightly later in type than that on the Edenhall case, while the groundwork in place of being finely punched with very small circles, is cross-hatched. Unfortunately there is no means of accurately dating the closest parallel to the case under discussion—the cylindrical box at Moulton Church, Norfolk. This, like several similar examples, must, however, be ascribed to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.¹ A parallel almost equally close with the same dotted ground, but one of continental origin, is afforded by a book binding in *cur ciselé* produced about 1482 by the binder of the Emperor Frederick III.²

The riband lettering with oakleaves which forms the Sacred Monogram on the cover of the Edenhall case is alone sufficient to fix its period as the very end of the fifteenth century or the early years of that which followed, and there is a close kinship noticeable between these letters and the elaborate *lettera francese* published by Vicentino at Rome in 1523.

§ 2

THE EARL'S DEFEAT

According to the N.E.D. the use of the word "luck" in the sense of a family *talisman* or *palladium* "originates with 'The Luck of Edenhall'", and the earliest example of this use known to the editors is *circa* 1800, the example quoted being Philip, Duke of Wharton's (1698-1731) Ballad as printed in Lysons' *Magna Britannia*. On the other hand the earliest reference to the *Luck of Edenhall* by that title which Mr. W. B. Honey was able to discover was in William Hutchinson's *An History of Cumberland*, published in 1794, where that version of Wharton's famous ballad—*The Drinking Match*—which commences with the lines,

¹ "Early sixteenth century" is the date ascribed to the similar cylindrical case in the British Museum, which used to contain the church plate at Little Welnetham, Suffolk. (*Guide to the Mediaeval Room*, p. 262 and fig. 172.)

² C. P. Goldschmidt *Gothic and Renaissance Bookbindings*, 1928 (limited edition), pl. x.

"God prosper long from being broke
The Luck of Edenhall,"

is given in full. The only earlier copy of the ballad that he was able to consult—an edition of 1740 which I have been unable to identify—gave the alternative and seemingly original opening,

"God prosper long our Lord the King
And likewise Edenhall."

The date of the composition of *The Drinking Match* is apparently unknown. Lewis Melville, the Duke's most recent biographer and critic, placed the ballad in the period 1719 to 1722.¹ This would certainly seem to be correct. It was clearly penned after Wharton's elevation to the Dukedom on January 28th, 1717-1718. The whole tone of these mock-heroic verses, though both bacchic and even tending towards *lèse majesté* in the last verse, is perfectly loyal, and they betray nothing of that perfervid and alcoholic Jacobitism which seemingly first made itself manifest at the drunken debauch that took place at Wharton Hall in September, 1723, in which the Duke played the leading part.² The reference to "our Royal Prince" would further suggest that the reconciliation between the King and the Prince of Wales, engineered by the Duchess of Kendal in April, 1720, had already taken place when the verses were written.

The orgy chronicled in these verses must, moreover, have occurred before July, 1723, since among the pseudonyms of the contesting bacchanalians mentioned in the ballad is that of "Earl Harold," a thin disguise for Anthony, Earl of Harold, son of Henry Grey, Duke of Kent, and brother-in-law of Sackville Tufton, Earl of Thanet, another of the champions. The Earl of Harold died on July 21st, 1723.

The *terminus ad quem* is, however, furnished by a broadside of *The Drinking Match*, printed in Dublin in 1722,

¹ Lewis Melville *The Life and Writings of Philip, Duke of Wharton*, 1913, p. 87. It must have been written before the end of June, 1725, when Wharton left for the Continent.

² The incident is described by Viscount Lonsdale in a letter to his cousin, James Lowther, dated September 26th, 1723 (*Hist. MSS. Comm.* 13th Rep. Appendix pt. vii, p. 123, *The MSS. of the Earl of Lonsdale*).

to which Mr. Percy J. Dobell drew attention in the *Times Literary Supplement* for March 17th, 1932.¹ In all probability the revel took place during the visit paid by Wharton to Edenhall in September, 1721, and recorded in a letter dated the 15th of that month from Richard Baynes of Appleby—the “Sir Baynes” of the ballad—to Colonel James Graham.² Apart from the servants, all, we may believe, got exceedingly drunk before they were finally carried off to bed in a state of blissful unconsciousness. Indeed, the entertainment would seem to have been remarkable for one incident only. It was probably on this occasion that the Duke, in drunken exuberance, insisted on drinking healths out of the Luck of Edenhall. Having quaffed he either threw the glass into the air or let it drop, and it was only the presence of mind of the butler, who caught it in a napkin, that prevented the Luck from being shattered.

Baynes does not mention the incident—even if he noticed it in his befuddled condition—but the memory of it survived until Brand put it upon record in his *Popular Antiquities*.³ And it would ever afterwards seem to have been a custom of the house that, whenever a guest was permitted to examine the Luck, the butler was always in attendance holding a napkin under it to prevent a repetition of the accident.

Wharton seems to have had no particular end in view when he wrote the *Earl's Defeat*: that is no end other than to immortalize the most unholy drunk of his none too sober career. But others had of recent years parodied that fine old ballad *Chevy-Chace* upon occasions of great moment. Two versions, one laudatory and the other defamatory had made their appearance on the landing of King William. Oudenarde had been celebrated in another. In 1711 a further parody was produced “against a disadvantageous Peace” at the time that the preliminaries

¹ *The Drinking Match. A new Ballad in Imitation of Chevy-Chace. By a Person of Quality. DUBLIN. Printed by Thomas Hume, in Smock-Alley 1722*” (see *The Times Literary Supplement*, March 17th, 1932, p. 202. These particulars are embodied in a letter from Mr. Percy J. Dobell in reply to one of mine printed in the *Supplement* for March 3rd.)

² *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, 10th Rep., Appendix pt. 10, p. 344—*The MSS. of Capt. J. F. Bagot*.

³ John Brand *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, 1849 edit., vol. 11, p. 487.

to the Treaty of Utrecht were under discussion. But others commemorated matters less elevating or less important; and Wharton merely followed the prevailing fashion.

The ballad must have met with a considerable and immediate popularity, since otherwise the obvious reference to it in one of Anthony Alsop's (*d.* 1726) Latin Odes¹ addressed to Sir John Dolben² would have been pointless—

"Canticum, quod Dux animante Bacchi
Numine inflatus cecinit, relegi."

The second verse opens with a reference to "Cheviae campos"

Five years after its first appearance in print the *Ballad*, with only some two or three differences of spelling, was included in E. Curll's *Whartomana*,³ printed in 1727, and the following year it was reprinted at Edinburgh as a broadside.⁴ As printed first in 1727 and later by Curll, as a pamphlet in 1728, and in the collected edition of *The Poetical Works of Philip, late Duke of Wharton*, published in 1731, the opening lines of *The Drinking Match* appear as—

"God prosper long our Lord the King
And also Edenhall."

In 1729, however, James Ralph published his *Miscellaneous Poems by Several Hands* wherein *The Drinking Match* appears under the title *A True and Lamentable Ballad call'd The Earl's Defeat [To the Tune of Chevy-Chase]*, provided with the popular opening lines—

"God prosper long from being broke
The Luck of Eden Hall."⁵

On the presumption that Wharton himself was responsible for the alteration in the opening lines, such alteration

¹ *Odorum Libri duo*, 1752, no. xxiv, pp. 79-80 and note p. 92.

² The Rev. Sir John Dolben, Bart. (1684-1756), succeeded his father in 1722.

³ *Whartomana*, pp. 19-26.

⁴ *The Drinking Match. An Imitation of Chevy Chase by the Duke of Wharton* Edinburgh, Printed, and Sold by several Booksellers in Town 1728 (Price 1 Penny).

⁵ A footnote states that the Luck was "A Pint Bumper at Sir Christopher Musgrave's." Thus Sir Christopher Musgrave, the fifth Baronet, of Edenhall,

must have taken place before the end of June, 1725,¹ when the Duke left England for Vienna overloaded with debts and never to return. That this alteration was so made is indicated by the allusions in Alsop's *Ode* to Sir John Dolben.

This alteration in the opening lines may have been made in deference to the wishes of Sir Christopher Musgrave, to the popular voice or to the change in Wharton's political sentiments; but whatever the reason, this change affords evidence that the talismanic character of the Edenhall goblet was accepted before the close of the first quarter of the eighteenth century and in all probability somewhat earlier.

Under the alternative title of *The Earl's Defeat* the ballad with these opening lines was reprinted in 1783 by Joseph Ritson in his *A Select Collection of English Songs*,² under its more familiar title of *The Drinking Match*, in William Hutchinson's *An History of Cumberland* of 1794;³ and in Lysons' *Magna Britannia*.⁴

§ 3

WHARTON OR LLOYD?

Not only is the date of *The Drinking Match* in dispute, but doubts have also been cast upon Wharton's reputed authorship. It is manifestly impossible to discuss the latter problem here. Doubt of Wharton's authorship

died in 1735. He has, however, been endowed by the various editors of Wharton's ballad with surprising longevity. Almost every edition of this version of the ballad up to the end of the eighteenth century is adorned with the above footnote, and Longfellow, in an attempt to impress his readers with his antiquarian learning, states that when he translated Uhland's poem, "Sir Christopher" was still the owner of the Luck. Uhland, who repeats the note, was, however, more or less correct, for when he wrote the owner of the Luck was the Rev. Sir Christopher John Musgrave, the ninth baronet, who died in 1834, the year in which Uhland's poem appeared. Longfellow's translation was not, however, produced until 1841, and it is therefore evident he merely repeated probably at third hand and without checking Ralph's original note.

No other Musgrave baronets bore the name Christopher between 1735 and Sir Christopher John, and none has done so since.

¹ He was in Rotterdam by July 4th

² Vol. II, pp. 50 *et seq.*

³ Vol. I, p. 281.

⁴ Vol. IV, p. CCIX.

would seem to have been felt though not voiced within a few years of the appearance of the ballad. For despite its appearance in Curll's *Whartoniana* of 1727, its separate reprinting in 1728, and its inclusion by Ralph in his *Miscellaneous Poems* in 1729, with the Duke's name attached, it was excluded from *The Life and Writings of Philip, Duke of Wharton* published in 1729.

Curll's *Whartoniana* and the reprint of 1731 are to-day generally considered to embody at most only three or four short poems that can definitely be ascribed to the pen of the Duke, and of these *The Drinking Match* is not one. Admittedly the ballad is doggerel, and the unwillingness of critics to accept it as Wharton's work appears to be based on the entirely unwarrantable assumption that a man who is capable of writing good verse is incapable of producing doggerel. Alsop, however, evidently entertained no doubt that the Duke was responsible, and his acceptance of Wharton's authorship must carry very considerable weight.

Wharton's responsibility for the verses was not definitely denied until 1791. In that year a contributor to *The Gentleman's Magazine*¹ asserted that he not only knew that the Duke was not the author, but that he knew who the poetaster was. The individual selected for this honour was one of Wharton's boon companions, a man named Lloyd, who is referred to in the ballad,

"Lloyd was his Name, and of Ganghall
Fast by the River Swale"

A few years later Sir Walter Scott, in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published in 1802-1803, made the same assertion,² and it was repeated by T. D. Whitaker³ and still later by Chambers.⁴ Not one of these critics, however, adduced any evidence to support his statement.

¹ Vol lxi, p 1079

² *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, edit T F Henderson, 1902, vol II, pp 321-322—" [The Ballad was] in reality composed by Lloyd, one of his [Wharton's] jovial companions "

Lewis Melville (pseud.) *The Life and Writings of Philip, Duke of Wharton*, 1913, p 87, describes *The Drinking Match* as "perhaps . . . his most noteworthy literary composition "

³ *An History of Richmondshire*, 1823, vol I, p 308

⁴ *Book of Days*, 1864, vol II, p 523

"Lloid of Gang Hall," who has not so far been identified, was possibly a descendant of Splandrian Lloyd of Brotton, heir of John, last Lord Lumley (*d* 1609). Gang Hall, in Healaugh, which lies to the west of Grinton, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, at the junction of Gang Beck with the Swale, was built by Philip, Lord Wharton, grandfather of the poet. Lloyd may have become possessed of Gang Hall in or after 1721, when the Wharton manors of Healaugh and Muker were conveyed by the Duke to trustees for the settlement of his debts. In 1723 a decree in Chancery enabled this to be carried out.¹

§ 4

THE LEGEND

It is scarcely to be expected that the legend² recounting the fairy origin of the Luck of Edenhall, should be possessed of a greater antiquity than is covered by the documented history of the Luck as a luck itself. Indeed the earliest record of the legend³ would appear to be much younger, for it is that which was contributed to *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1791, by some then recent visitor to Edenhall.⁴ Therein the tradition is briefly recounted and the Luck and its case described. The legend is almost too well-known to be told once more. Since, however, this visitor's account is the earliest recorded version, and one that differs somewhat from the more modern recension, which is that generally quoted, it seems worth repeating in the visitor's own words,

"Tradition, our only guide here, says, that a party of Fairies were drinking and making merry round a well near the Hall, called St. Cuthbert's well; but, being

¹ T. D. Whitaker *op cit*, vol. 1, p. 308.

² A careful study of this legend is included in E. Sidney Hartland's *The Science of Fairy Tales* (edit. 1925, cp. vi), and in Thomas Keightley's *Fairy Mythology* (edit. 1847), while John Burke devoted three pages to it in the fourth volume of *The Patrician* (pp. 356-358).

³ Nicolson and Burn make no mention of either the Luck or the legend in their *History and Antiquities of Westmorland and Cumberland*, 1777.

⁴ Vol. lxi, pt. ii, p. 721. This visitor who signs himself W. M. was probably one of the Musgraves. Francis Douce, the antiquary, had visited Edenhall in 1785, on which occasion he wrote some verses on the Luck. They are quoted in full by Llewellynn Jewitt in the *Reliquary* (vol. xix, pp. 149-150).

interrupted by the intrusion of some curious people, they were frightened and made a hasty retreat, and left the cup in question: one of the last screaming out,

"If this cup should break or fall,
Farewell the Luck of Edenhall."¹

The legend, such as it is, was in entire harmony with the "Gothick" spirit of the time, which saw either its resurrection or its birth. And the circumstances that the Cup was no mere legendary object but actually existed, that it was evidently of a very considerable antiquity, and that the Musgraves for some generations at least had regarded it as their most precious possession, endowed it with exceptional interest in the eyes of the romantic versifiers of the period.

It was seemingly the version of the legend that appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* that formed the basis of that which was three years later embodied by William Hutchinson in *An History of Cumberland*. He, however, substituted for the "curious people" the figure of the butler of Edenhall, who as the Seneschal has been such a boon to all the poetasters to whom the story in one form or another has appealed. Heaven alone knows what rhymes they would have found for *mayordomo*!¹

With the passage of the years the original legend was improved upon by local historians, incidents were inserted in the first brief narrative, entirely imaginary scenes added and the story finally improved out of all knowledge by the ballad-writers of the first half of the nineteenth century.

One of the first to fall a victim to the glamour of the legend was J. H. Wiffen (d. 1836), the librarian to the Duke of Bedford. His version of the legend, which bears no resemblance whatever to the original, first appeared in *The Literary Souvenir* for 1826 under the title of *The Luck of Edenhall*.² His ballad did not, however, become generally popular until after it had been reprinted in

¹ Hutchinson. *An History, etc.*, vol. 1, p. 269, gives the curse as,

"If that glass either break or fall,
Farewell the luck of Edenhall."

² *The Literary Souvenir, or Cabinet of Poetry and Romance*, edited by Alaric A. Watts, for 1826, pp. 26-35.

1842 in S C Hall's *The Book of British Ballads*¹ Wiffen introduced further picturesque elements into the legend. According to him it was "Lord Musgrave" himself who stole the "cup"; and he introduces the element of the running stream beyond which the outraged fairies were unable to follow the fleeing baron and his prize. John Robert Robinson² heard or invented an even more elaborate version in which the King of the Fairies attempted to strike a bargain with the ravisher for the goblet's return, the inducements being a bag of pearls, a diamond of amazing brilliance or a ton of gold. But Robinson's statements cannot be relied on; as an historian and antiquary he is utterly untrustworthy. The standard of his erudition may be measured by his assertion that the Musgraves had been established at Edenhall since the days of Edward I. and that the letters I.H.S. appear on the top rim of the Cup.

Johann Ludwig Uhland's (1787-1862) *Das Glück von Edenhall* appeared in 1834 and was added to his *Gedichte*. Uhland's poem, which owes nothing either to the legend or to Wiffen, was translated by Longfellow in 1841,³ and a few years later by Alexander Platt, whose *The Poems of L. Uhland* appeared at Leipzig in 1848. In 1864 the late Professor W. W. Skeat's *The Songs and Ballads of Uhland*⁴ was published and in 1869 W C Sandars' *The Poems of Uhland* appeared.

In 1856 the Rev Beilby Porteus, vicar of Edenhall, published his version of the legend under the well-worn title of *The Luck of Edenhall*.⁵ This is certainly the longest

¹ *The Book of British Ballads*, edit 1842, pp 399 *et seq*. The ballad is reprinted in the subsequent editions of 1853, 1879 and 1881 with the same introductory note. It was also reprinted without the note in S R Pattison's *The Brothers Wiffen* 1880, pp 249-255.

² John Robert Robinson *Philip, Duke of Wharton*, 1896, p 48.

³ On April 2nd, 1841, Longfellow wrote to his father—"I have not written anything lately save the translation of a German ballad, *The Luck of Edenhall*, published in the *Boston Notion*." *The Luck of Edenhall*, was reprinted in December, 1841 in *Ballads and other Poems*, and was made use of in George Ripley's *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature*, vol xiv (1842), pp 44-46.

⁴ In his *Preface to The Songs and Ballads of Uhland*, 1864, p xv Skeat writes "My own translation is an independent one, indeed, I was not able to obtain a copy of the above [Alexander Platt's translation] till my own was already in the press." In the case of *The Luck of Edenhall* it is painfully evident that Skeat made the freest possible use of Longfellow's ballad here and there. Platt again evidently made the same large use of Longfellow, though Sandars seems to have attempted an original translation.

⁵ Rev B Porteus *The Luck of Edenhall, a poem in three cantos*, 1856, with a coloured plate of the *Luck*. Referred to by J Sullivan *Cumberland and Westmor-*

and most ambitious recension of the story, since it runs to three cantos. Like its predecessors it bears no resemblance to the original version. Still another version of the legend was produced by J. P. White about 1865, but his *Luck of Edenhall* did not see the light of print until after his death in 1868.¹

A last version, the author of which I have not been able to identify, is printed by William Whellan, in his *The History and Topography of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland*.² It begins,

"Twas summer-tide, when days are long,
And holm and haugh were green."

The hero and ravisher of the cup is the "little foot-page" to Sir Ralph and the Lady Isabel Musgrave, who on the advice of a "wise woman" goes to the Fairies' Spring for the cup, a draught from which restores the Lady Isabel from her death-like swoon

§ 5

THE AGE AND ORIGIN OF THE LEGEND

This much for the legendary and literary history of the Luck of Edenhall. We must now face a second problem, or rather a combination of problems. How did the legend of 1791 originate and how old is it? And secondly what was the purpose which the Cup later known as the Luck of Edenhall and other similar cups, to which legends of the same type have become attached, was originally intended to fulfil?

It seems impossible to trace the Luck of Edenhall by that name earlier than 1729 in contemporary documents. Dr. Hugh Todd, the author of a manuscript account of *The City and Diocese of Carlisle* in 1689, saw the goblet however, and he believed, no doubt on account of the Sacred

land, *Ancient and Modern*, 1857, and by Llewellynn Jewitt, who gives lengthy extracts from it (*The Reliquary*, vol. xix). There is no copy of Porteus' poem in the British Museum.

¹ J. P. White *Lays and Legends of the English Lake Country*, 1873, pp. 143-146 edited by his sister, B. J.

² pp. 533-534.

Monogram on its case, that it had once been used as a chalice.¹ But none of the other seventeenth century topographers and antiquaries, whose descriptions of the Carlisle district and its antiquities have been printed by the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society in its *Tract Series*, makes any mention of the Luck. Nor do any of the county histories such as that of Nicholson and Burn, published in 1777, nor the proceedings of any of the archaeological societies, nor contributors to the *Gentleman's Magazine* add any information of value to the foregoing.

Though in the early Middle Ages legends of the type of that attached to the Luck of Edenhall were common to the whole of northern Europe, or at least that part of it which had come under Danish influence, and were certainly known, as witness the tale of the Cup of Willey Howe,² in the north-east of England as early as the twelfth century, it is difficult to believe that the legend as related in 1791 is a survival seemingly unique in England from those very distant times. The alternative to a refusal to accept the legend as a relic of an almost forgotten myth, and to credit it with a truly amazing longevity is to condemn it as a fabrication of the eighteenth century, a manifestation of the Gothick Revival, possibly encouraged by the story of the silver "Fairy Cup of Lord Duffus" related by John Aubrey.³ But the alternative appears even more improbable than the first possibility, unlikely though that would seem. Moreover, there are certain circumstances that must be urged against it. A Luck without a legend is an impossibility. And the very use of the word in Ralph's version of the Ballad in 1729 presupposes some legendary embellishments at an earlier, possibly considerably earlier, date.

Slight confirmatory evidence is also afforded by the leather case of the *Luck*, which is undoubtedly of late fifteenth or early sixteenth century make,⁴ and bears

¹ This opinion for what it is worth was endorsed by a contributor to *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1791 (vol. lx1, p. 995) signing himself *Antiquarius*. No mention of the Luck appears in Todd's account as printed. The assertion that he saw it—apparently recorded in some unpublished MS—is vouched for by E. S. Hartland following Fitch.

² See pp. 36 and 37 *ante*.

³ *Miscellanies*, edit. 1826, p. 149, quoting a correspondent writing March 25th, 1695.

⁴ This was first pointed out and reasons given for the belief by Mr. Fitch.

the Sacred Monogram I H S ¹ This led Dr. Hugh Todd² and others after him to assume that the Cup had at some time been used as a Chalice.³

The use of the Sacred Monogram on the cup case I take to be merely talismanic, a guard against any attempt by the fairies of St. Cuthbert's Well to retrieve their stolen property.

Turning to our second problem—what was the original purpose served by the Edenhall Cup before it was converted by the alchemy of time into a fairy luck? For some purpose it must have originally served. It is certainly ancient enough to have come from the East as part of the spoils of one of the later Crusades. But there is no evidence that any Musgrave, or Stapleton, of Edenhall ever went upon the Crusades. Alternatively it must have reached the one-time lords of Edenhall either by way of trade or as a gift. Mr. Hartland was of the opinion that all these so-called fairy cups, to which romantic legends similar to that attaching to the Luck of Edenhall cling, "were probably sacrificial vessels dedicated to the old pagan worship of the house-spirits, of which we find so many traces among the Indo-European peoples. These house-spirits had their chief seat on the family hearth; and their great festival was the New Year, celebrated at the winter solstice. The policy of the Church in early and mediaeval times was to baptize to Christian uses as many of the heathen beliefs and ceremonies as possible."⁴

There is one insurmountable obstacle to this theory: not one of the existing vessels on which Mr. Hartland based his theory is sufficiently ancient to have been "dedicated to the old pagan worship," with the possible exception of the Ballafletcher Cup. Whatever purpose they originally served, that purpose was forgotten and replaced by an etiological myth, suggesting a fairy origin and in the case of the Ballafletcher connecting it directly with the house-spirit.

¹ The visitor, W M, to Edenhall in 1791 notes that—"The case is said to be the second, yet bears the marks of antiquity, and is charged with IHS" (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1791, p. 721)

² Mannix and Whellan *History, Gazetteer, and Directory Cumberland*, 1847, p. 256

³ William Hutchinson *A History, etc.*, p. 269, notes that it is supposed to have been a chalice

⁴ E. S. Hartland *The Science of Fairy-Tales*, p. 157

We are thrown upon the third possibility. There exists record of literally scores of what are or were "lucks" in all but name, in that they were at one time the sole evidence in the possession of their holders of their rights to lands or offices that they held. These swords, horns, cups, knives, spurs and so forth were the visible evidences of the conveyance of the lands or property or offices with which they were associated in frankalmoigne or in fee. The Luck of Edenhall in all probability stands upon the same footing as the Horn of Ulphus, or that of the Honour of Tutbury.

Unquestionably the earlier of these Lucks have been intimately associated with the histories and fortunes of certain ancient families; and though not talismans in the true sense of the word, the material prosperity of the families that owned them has at least in early times been dependent upon their preservation. Their talismanic character would, however, appear to be a pseudo-mediaeval accretion of the eighteenth century in harmony with the "Gothick" sentimentalism of the time; it is an attribute created to account for the long established but nebulous belief that on their preservation depended the well-being of the families to which they belonged, at a time when the actual reason for their preservation had long been forgotten.

To my mind there can be little doubt that the Musgrave goblet is the emblem whereby the manor of Edenhall was originally held. To prove the correctness of this conviction is, however, at this date impossible.

In the Foreword to this book, I have briefly alluded to a metal "festal trumpet" some time at Edenhall, and now in the collection of Mr. F. H. Cripps-Day. To discuss this curious and interesting instrument, and the problems arising from a study of its features, is not feasible here. But the fact that its elaborate painted decoration embodies an obvious representation of the Luck at least entitles this relic to mention in concluding this chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

GEMS AND JEWELS

" Whence the brooch of burning gold,
That clasps the Chieftain's mantle-fold,

Gem' ne'er wrought on Highland mountain,
Did the fairy of the fountain,
Or the mermaid of the wave,
Frame thee in some coral cave?
Did, in Iceland's darksome mine,
Dwarf's swart hands thy metal twine?
Or, mortal-moulded, comest thou here
From England's love, or France's fear?"

WALTER SCOTT *The Lord of the Isles*, Canto II, XI

No more convincing proof of the unquestioning belief, with which the talismanic properties of certain gems were accepted by both high and low, ignorant and learned, during the Middle Ages—and indeed until much later—could be produced than the circumstance that the charge of the misuse and abuse of the latent powers of such gems was levelled against two of England's greatest sons, both ministers of the Crown. One of the several offences urged by Henry III. against his great minister Hubert de Burgh, in 1232, was that he had "*lapidem quendam pretiosum nimis qui talem habuit virtutem, quod invincibilem reddidit in bello, de thesauro suo furtive sustulit, et eam Leolino inimico suo, regi Walliae, proditiose transmisit*"¹ And

¹ Matthew Paris *Chronica Majora*, vol. II, p. 222—*Chronicles and Memorials*, edit. Henry Richards Luard. Thorndike in his (*A History of Magic*, vol. II,) quotes Stubbs' paraphrase of the passage (*Constitutional History*, 1906, II, 45-46) and accuses that great historian of nodding when the latter says that the stone was given to the "Prince of Wales." Thorndike had not apparently bothered to verify the authority cited (Paris), had he done so he would have found Stubbs correct if a trifle open to misconstruction.

three hundred years later when the great Cardinal, Thomas Wolsey, fell from grace, one of the treasonable matters with which he was charged was that he had made use of a ring, whereby he was believed to control a familiar demon and by its magic power "bring a man in favour with his prince" and sway King Henry's purpose as he willed

Belief in the prophylactic and talismanic properties of gems is of Oriental origin. And the lucubrations of Damigeron and of Marbod, the twelfth century Bishop of Rennes, and of their disciples are founded upon the pseudo-science and the superstitions of the East. The stones, precious and semi-precious, that these worthies catalogued are of two types: they are amuletic and talismanic, those that cure disease, detect poison and ward off the attacks of demons, and those that procure love, and power and the trust of princes or ensure victory for the user. These latter might be considered to come within the category of talismans and lucks were it not that the early lapidaries transposed the virtues of all stones with a fine disregard for superstition, tradition or reason.

I shall make no attempt to disentangle the contradictions and uncertainties of these early writers. Those who wish to indulge in this absorbing, but it is to be feared unprofitable, pastime, had better consult one or more of the half dozen studies of the works of these lapidaries published during the last two decades. The task is beyond me; and as I have said it is unprofitable, at least at the present juncture, for none of the findings of these early writers would seem to have any bearing upon the present inquiry.

One would naturally expect that such stones as were believed to ensure victory, interpreted either literally or in its widest sense, would figure largely in any catalogue of personal, family or national talismans. This quality has been ascribed in turn to amber, adamant, alectoria, beryl, calcedony, diamond, the *gagatromaeus*, in the Middle Ages, the most potent of such charms,

Quem qui gestarit dux pugnaturus in hostem
Hostem depulsum terraque marique fugabit,

And lastly to the toad-stone, which Lhuyd, the seventeenth century curator of the Ashmolean Museum and an

indefatigable collector of strange beliefs, says was in his day thought "to prevent the burning of a house, and the sinking of a boat, and if a commander in the field has one of them about him, he will either be sure to win the day, or all his men shall fairly dye on the spot."¹ Certainly no one who sought a personal talisman or a family "luck" could ask more of it. But such possessions were not always an unmixed blessing. Pliny knew of a Gaulish knight who owned and wore a "serpent's egg," an *ovum anguineum*, one of those strange gems said to be made by writhing serpents from their slaver, which were thought not only to bring success in law-suits to their possessors, but to secure immediate and free access for them to kings and princes. Unhappily for the owner the Emperor Claudius heard of his treasure, far too potent and dangerous a possession, and promptly cut his head off,² a fate which would probably have been Wolsey's had he not died when he did.

Oddly enough with the exception of the diamond, which in the East figures frequently as the talisman of reigning houses, none of the foregoing stones would appear to have celebrity in this rôle. Even in the Orient the pearl is in general a more popular talisman. To take but one outstanding example, the gem most prized by Hatim, chief of the Arab tribe of Tai, an historical character who flourished shortly before the promulgation of Islam, was a pearl taken from the mouth of a dragon, that restored the sight of the blind, cured the bite of snakes, endeared the possessor to friend and foe alike, ensured victory in battle, conferred the most profound wisdom and boundless wealth on him, and rendered all creatures obedient to his command.

The most famous of all talismanic gems is probably the Koh-i-Noor, the Mountain of Light, which a very modest legend traces back to the year 57 B C, and a wilder one seeks to identify with a diamond discovered five thousand years ago in the bed of the river Godavery, near Masulipatam. Its documented history, however, only takes it back to the year 1304, when as part of the spoils of Malwa, the capital of the Pathan empire and

¹ *Philosophical Transactions*, vol xxviii, No 9 (1713), p 98

² Pliny. *Naturalis Historia*, xxx, 52-54.

the seat of the line of Vikramaditza, it was deposited in the treasury at Delhi. And at Delhi it was found by Tamerlane's grandson Zahir-ad-din-Mohammed, better known by the name of Baber (1483-1530) when he conquered Hindustan and founded the Empire of the Great Moghuls.

When Nadir Shah had overcome the last of the Baberides and then re-established him as a puppet king on the throne of his ancestors at Delhi, the conqueror obtained the gem by a trick. Calling to mind the oriental custom of exchanging turbans in token of amity, he insisted on carrying out this ancient gesture. The fallen despot could not refuse and had the mortification of seeing his turban, in the folds of which he had concealed his talisman, upon the head of his rival.

The frequent transfer of this gem into alien hands had in the past always coincided with the collapse of the power of its previous possessor, no matter for surprise, and by a very natural confounding of cause and effect it had long been held that similar disasters would always follow upon its loss. It was for this reason that when, after the Sikh conquest of the Punjab in the early part of the nineteenth century, the gem came into the possession of Runjeet Singh, who always wore it on his arm, the "Lion of Lahore" sought by bequeathing it to the shrine of Juggernaut to secure good fortune for his house. His successors would not, however, give it up. And the Koh-i-Noor penultimately, after the rout of the "army of God and the Sikh Khalsa" at Goojerat, fell into the hands of the East India Company. After considerable discussion as to the fate of this huge gem it was decided to offer it to Queen Victoria, who was graciously pleased to accept it.

Meanwhile the earlier superstition that its loss had always been a preliminary to disaster had been modified to the belief that its possession was always fatal to a man, a belief not unjustified by its past history. And when Queen Victoria died she did not leave it to her successor but to his Consort, and in the possession of the reigning Queen it has remained ever since.

A diamond that in the East at one time enjoyed a reputation second only to that of the Koh-i-Noor was owned by the Rajah of Matara in the Island of Borneo. On its

possession the safety of the dynasty was supposed to rest. And like other stones less precious it was also credited with marvellous curative properties; the Malays believed that water in which it had been placed would cure any and every disease. So greatly indeed was it esteemed that the Governor of Batavia offered the Rajah a huge sum of money and two ships of war fully equipped in exchange for it. The offer needless to say was refused.¹

The jewels of the elves of mediaeval legend, like the productions of the smith dwarfs of Teutonic myth, were believed to ensure good fortune for the mortal families on whom they were bestowed. Every service done to the "little folk" was rewarded by a gift, which upon certain conditions brought a plenitude of bliss to the recipient. These evidences of the friendly relations existing between mortals and the inhabitants of the Middle World are frequently mentioned in the folk-tales of Northern Europe, but documented examples are very rare. Praetorius, however, records that a Nixe, or water-sprite, fell in love with a member of the great family of Alvensleben of Magdeburg. And when this strange affair ended in the way such incidents always did by the mortal marrying another mortal, the deserted water-maiden presented her departing lover with a ring with the warning that upon its preservation depended the prosperity of his house.² The ring was still in existence at the close of the seventeenth century and may yet be so.

Though traces of the belief in talismanic gems are to be discovered in every country in Europe, it is in Ireland, Wales and Scotland that the greater number of actual "charm-stones" are to be found to-day. But their one-time talismanic powers have in general sadly shrunk, and they are now thought only fit to serve in the brewing of drenches for sick beasts. Among Irish amulets the Imokelly amulet³ and the Ballyvourney Murrain Stone are, I believe, still held in some estimation for this purpose; but possibly the best known of these is the Garnavilla amulet, a crystal ball set in a bronze frame with a loop for suspension.⁴ Something, however, of the talismanic

¹ William Jones *The History and Mystery of Precious Stones*, p. 43

² Johann Praetorius *Anthropodemon Plutonicus*, 1666, Bk. I, pp. 109-113

³ *Journal R H A A I*, 4th Ser., vol. III, pp. 440-444

⁴ *Journal R H A A I*, 4th Ser., vol. V, p. 347

character would seem to have been retained by the Crystal of Currahmore and that belonging to the Earls of Tyrone.

In Wales, though the prophylactic character of these stones predominates, their use being restricted by more or less elaborate rules, it is still believed that before the deaths of their owners these crystals become damp and dim,¹—they sweat like the stone of King John when brought into contact with poison.

Scotland is unusually rich in these charm-stones, and about them still clings some memory of the circumstance that in the distant past they were universally held to be fortune-bringers. In their pseudo-histories the marvellous elements, so noticeable in the legends relating to the cup and horn lucks of the English Border and of Northern Germany and Scandinavia, are wanting. But some memory of the circumstance that the beliefs associated with them are originally Eastern may possibly be enshrined in the story told of so many of them that they were brought back from the Crusades by some ancestor.

This tradition is attached to the Crystal of Currahmore, so called because it is preserved at Currahmore, the seat of Lord Waterford. The crystal, which is larger than an orange and bound with bands of silver, is said to have been brought from the Holy Land by one of the Le Poers, to whom it had been given by Godefroy de Bouillon. Unfortunately for this story the chroniclers of the first Crusade have nothing to say of any Le Poer; and genealogists know nothing of this family until Roger, Robert, William and Simon Le Poer sailed across the narrow sea to take part in the conquest of Ireland in the days of Henry II. Of these Roger, who died in 1186, married the niece of Sir Amaric de St Laurence. But Robert, though he never took the Cross, being too busy about the King's affairs at home, did the next best thing and made a pilgrimage to St James of Compostella in 1188. It was on his return from this act of devotion that he and his companion, Ralph Fraser, were seized by Raymond of Toulouse, a piece of high-handedness that precipitated trouble between Raymond and the Lion Heart that lasted the best part of that King's brief reign.

Like most similar crystals that of Currahmore is held

¹ Marie Trevelyan *Folk-lore and Folk-stories of Wales*, p. 231.

to be an infallible cure for murrain and other diseases in cattle. The cure is effected by plunging the stone in a running stream and making the sick beasts walk through the water ¹

The ancient family of the Bairds of Auchmeddan, now extinct, at one time possessed a globular black flint mounted in silver, on which is engraved in eighteenth century script the statement that this amulet had "belonged to the family of Baird of Auchmeddan from the year 1174." With it was preserved a second talisman, the shrivelled, mummified paw of a bear. According to the family tradition this beast, of monstrous size and fearful ferocity, attacked King William the Lion when he was out hunting one day. In the king's train, and occupying some menial position, was one of the Bairds, who courageously opposed himself to the beast and slew it. On this fortunate happening the fortunes of the family were founded, and in memory thereof the first Baird kept the paw of the animal whose death had given him his start in the world.

Since there was no Crusade in 1174, it is to be presumed that Baird made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land as some return to the powers who had so watched over his destiny, and brought the stone back with him.

In the middle of the eighteenth century both the crystal and the bear's paw passed by marriage to the Frazers of Findrack.

The most celebrated of these stones said to have come from the Holy Land is the Penny of the Lockharts of Lee, better known as the Lee-Penny, which not only enjoys in Scotland the same paramount position that the Luck of Edenhall does in England, but can also lay claim to a celebrity almost as world wide. For it was the Lee-Penny that to no little extent inspired Sir Walter Scott's immortal romance *The Talisman*.

The legendary history of the Lee-Penny commences with the visit of a remote ancestor of that family to the Holy Land.

Sir Simon Lockhart of Lee and Gartland played a not unimportant part in the reigns of Robert the Bruce and of his son David. He was one of that band of Scottish

¹ Lady Wilde *Ancient Legends of Ireland*, p. 111. The account there furnished is extracted from a letter written by the Marchioness of Waterford.

knights who accompanied James the Good Lord Douglas, on his expedition to the Holy Land with the heart of Bruce. Douglas, as is well known, impatient to be at handstrokes with the Unbelievers, turned aside to Spain where there was always some bickering toward, and was there killed in 1330. Lockhart and such of the Scots as had escaped Douglas' fate, proceeded to Palestine and there took part in the eternal war against the Crescent.

According to tradition he made prisoner on one occasion an Emir of great wealth and of high standing. When a matter of ransom arose the aged mother of the captive came to the Christian camp. Lockhart had already fixed the sum to be paid, and this she brought with her, but during the transaction from her purse fell a silver coin inserted in the centre of which was a red stone, and the Saracen lady showed so much haste to recover it that Lockhart became convinced of its great value when compared with mere money. Sir Simon, considering that all was fair when dealing with an infidel, immediately went back on his bargain and demanded that the amulet, for such he considered it to be, should be added to the ransom. The lady agreed and even explained how it should be used and to what uses it might be put. Like other charm-stones the water in which it was dipped acted as a styptic, as a febrifuge, and possessed other properties as a medical talisman.

Sir Simon Lockhart, after learning by practical experience of the wonders that it wrought, brought it back to Scotland, and left it to his heirs, to whom and to the whole of Clydesdale it became known, as it still is, as the Lee-Penny from the name of Sir Simon's seat of Lee.

About the Lee-Penny has gathered no specific tradition that it is a family luck, but the passage of time has very definitely given it that character, though its reputed potency as a medical charm has rather overshadowed such an attribute. Indeed, so great was its reputation that when almost every other charm, as savouring of the miraculous and occasioned by sorcery, was condemned by the Church of Scotland, and recourse to them forbidden, the Lee-Penny was excepted.

The Glasgow Assembly Books of the middle of the seventeenth century contain the following passage relating to this special privilege:

"Quhilk day amongst the referries of the Brethren of the Ministry of Lanark, it was proponed to the Synod that Gavin Hamilton of Raploch had pursuait an Complaint before them against Sir James Lockhart of Lee, anent the supersticious using of an Stone, set in silver, for the curing of deseased Cattle, qlk the said Gavin affirmed could not be lawfully usit, and that they had deferrit to give ony decisionne thairin till the advice of the Assemblie might be had concerning the same. The Assemblie having inquirt of the manner of using thereof, and particularly understood, be examination of the said Laird of Lee and otherwise, that the custom is only to cast the stone in some water, and give the deseased Cattle thereof to drink, and that the same is done without using any words, such as Charmers and Sorcereirs use in thair unlawfull practices, and considering that in nature thair are many things seem to work strange effects, whereof no human wit can give a reason, it having pleast God to give to stones and herbs a speciall vertue for healing of many infirmities in man and beast, advises the Brethren to surcease thair process, as therein they perceive no ground of Offence; and admonishes the said Laird of Lee, in the using of the said stone, to take heid that it be usit hereafter with the least scandle that possibly maybe"¹

The fame of the Lee-Penny was not confined to Scotland, and when the plague raged in Newcastle, in the reign of Charles I., it was lent to the citizens to stay its ravages, £6,000 being pledged for its safe return,² an indication of the very high estimation in which it was held. A less highly esteemed stone "jaspe stane for stemming of bluid, estimat to fyve hundreth French Crounes" was stolen in 1624 by James Keith of Benholme from the house of George, the Earl Marischal.³

The only blemish in the legend relating to the Lee-Penny is that the coin in which the red stone is mounted is of the late fifteenth century—not Byzantine of the Lower Empire as it was once said to be—being a groat of Edward IV. of the London Mint.

¹ Quoted by Scott in the Notes to *The Talisman*

² *Proc Soc Antiq Scotland*, vol iv, (1863), p 223

³ Pitcairn *Criminal Trials*, vol iii, pp. 563-564, *Proc. Soc. Antiq Scot*, vol xxvii, p 513

The talismanic qualities of the Lee-Penny are or were supposed to be possessed by two other so-called "pennies"—the Lockerby Penny and the Black Penny of the Humebyers. The Lockerby Penny is a piece of silver with which, when placed in the end of a forked stick, the waters of the well which it is desired to render medicinal are stirred. It is recorded by Henderson that on one occasion £50 was deposited with the family for the use of this charm by a Northumbrian user.¹ The Black Penny of the Humebyers, which belonged to a family whose name Henderson conceals under the anonymity of T., was probably a Roman coin or medal. Its present whereabouts are unknown as it was loaned about 1870 to some persons residing near Morpeth and never returned.²

It is not difficult to see how many of these amuletic gems in the course of time gathered to themselves the character of a family luck—to which some etiological legend embodying the story of its miraculous or romantic origin was in turn attached. The will of Sir Nathaniel Bacon of Suffkey, drawn up in 1614 when he believed himself to be at the point of death, shews this process in action.

"I give to all my three daughters the jewel of unicorn's horn, according to their mother's [his first wife's] direction, that each one may challenge the use thereof when needs require, and my wife may have the use thereof when she needs, but my daughter [Anne wife of Sir John] Townshend is to have the custody thereof for life."³

Sir Nathaniel's fears were not, however, realized upon this occasion—the jewel, maybe, had something to do with his recovery—and it was not until 1622 that, at the ripe age of seventy-five, he joined the majority.

It would be of considerable interest to know whence Sir Nathaniel's first wife Anne, who was the illegitimate daughter of Sir Thomas Gresham and a lady from Bruges, obtained this amulet and if it still exists. The latter contingency would seem to be by no means unlikely since, I believe, the Marquess Townshend still possesses the cup

¹ William Henderson *Notes on the Folklore of the Northern Counties of England*, 1879, p. 163.

² *loc. cit.*

³ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth—James I, Addenda*, 1580-1625, p. 542.

formed from the silver of the Great Seal of Philip and Mary destroyed in 1559, which Sir Nicholas Bacon made an heirloom of his house at Stiffkey. It is one of three cups each of which bears a similar inscription round its lip—"A thyrd bowle made of the Greate Seale of Englande, and left by Syr Nycholas Bacon, Knygt, Lorde Keeper, as an heyrelome to his house of Stewkey, 1574"¹

But the most celebrated of these talismans is the *Clach na Bratich* of the Robertsons of Struan

The earliest version of the tradition relating to the *Clach na Bratich*, the Stone of the Standard, and that favoured by the family of Struan in the middle of the eighteenth century was set down by Duncan Robertson of Drumachine, who, while an exile in France for his share in the 'Forty-Five, succeeded in 1749 to the chieftainship of the clan.

The story as told by him is, however, bare not only of dates but also of some historical incidents, which lend it colour and afford some slender support to its more romantic details. These shortcomings have been remedied in the account which follows.

One of the most ardent adherents of John, the Red Comyn, whom Bruce stabbed in the Church of the Grey Friars at Dumfries in 1306, had been the victim's son-in-law, Sir Alexander MacDougall, Lord of Argyle; and it was the latter's son, John Bacach or Lame John, Lord of Lorn, who on August 11th, 1306, surprised the fugitive King and his meagre following near the Holy Well of St. Fillan, at Dalry, in Argyllshire.

Neither Bruce's ultimate success nor the passage of time served to curb or lessen the hatred of the MacDougalls for the reigning house. More than thirty years later, when King Robert had been in his grave for close upon a decade, they still cherished hopes of revenge if not upon Bruce then upon his son and upon those who had supported him.

Donnachhadh Reamhair, or, to give him the English equivalent of the almost unpronounceable Gaelic, Duncan

¹ One of the two other cups was presented by Mrs Edmond Wodehouse, in 1915, to the British Museum. This was an heirloom of the Lord Keeper's house of Redgrave, and was long in the possession of the Wodehouse family, which traced its descent from him.

the Fat, one of Bruce's staunchest partizans and the founder of the family of Struan of Rannoch, was born about the year 1275; and for him it has been claimed, but without much justification, that he was descended from the ancient Celtic Earls of Atholl. During the calamitous months and years that had followed the slaughter of the Red Comyn and the Bruce's crowning at Scone in March, 1306, Duncan gave every assistance in his power to the King of Scots. When, after the disaster of Methven, the Bruce sought refuge in Atholl and Breadalbane, Duncan offered him a brief sanctuary at a house of his in the wood of Kinnachan near Loch Tummel.

In 1338 Ewan MacDougall, Lord of Lorn, lame John's son, descended sword in hand upon Rannoch and encamped near the river Ericht about two miles from Loch Rannoch. There Duncan found him and after a stubborn resistance defeated and captured the invader. Thereafter MacDougall was kept a prisoner upon one of the islands in Loch Rannoch. By a stratagem, however, he managed to escape. Following the course of the river Ericht he endeavoured to make his way northwards into Lochaber. Duncan and his men followed hot foot upon the trail of the fugitive but failed to overtake him. Nightfall found them at the southern end of Loch Ericht and there upon marshy ground by the side of a spring they encamped. The next morning they struck camp and when they pulled up Duncan's banner-staff the chieftain found embedded in the clod of earth adhering to the butt-end a bright globular crystal—the *Clach na Bratich*, the Stone of the Standard—which has ever since been the Luck of Duncan's descendants, the Robertsons of Struan.

A second version of the story says that, when in 1314 Duncan the Fat marched to join Bruce at the village of St Ninian, near the Bannock Burn, he encamped the night before the battle in the open and in the morning the crystal was found as previously related adhering to his banner-staff. This bauble he shewed to his followers and opined from the bright lights he saw within it that success would crown their arms that day.

As a consequence either of the overwhelming victory which followed upon this prognostication or of some other successful feat of arms foretold in the same way, the reputation

of the Stone was established; and thenceforth whenever the clan was "out" the Stone was carried by the chief upon his person in a case of golden filigree, not only that he might consult this oracle as to the result of any engagement, but that the safety of himself and his clan might be assured. It was moreover believed that so long as this talisman remained unharmed in the possession of the family, not only would the fortunes of the Robertsons of Struan thrive but that every cause they espoused would ultimately be successful.

Credited as this and similar stones were in the Middle Ages with an origin but little less strange than that of the toad-stone, and the Druid's Egg, the *ovum anguineum*,

" the potent Adder stone
Gender'd 'fore th' autumnal Moon,"

superstition endowed the *Clach na Bratich* with other and equally marvellous properties. It is not recorded that among these was the faculty of detecting poison; but it was certainly credited, like the Penny of the Lockharts of Lee and the Crystal of the Campbells of Glenlyon, with the power to cure disease in both man and beast. Like the latter the Robertson "Luck" had to be held in the hand of the laird himself when it was immersed in the water which was to effect the cure.

To a very considerable extent the belief that the Stone of the Standard was the palladium of Struan has been justified by events. Though the Stone was unable to prevent both Duncan and his son Robert from being taken prisoners at the Battle of Nevill's Cross in 1346, the material fortunes of the house steadily grew from that time, and so far as history records they were invariably loyal to the House of Stuart. When James I was murdered in Blackfriars Monastery, at Perth, in 1436, Red Robert of Struan was one of the foremost in the hunt for the regicides, Sir Robert Graham and the Earl of Atholl. And as a reward for his services on this occasion he received in 1451 from James II a Crown Charter erecting his lands into a free Barony. Even when Robert, the tenth chief, about 1600 had managed, through the various channels then known to gentlemen of family, to dissipate most of his

property, a kinsman in Edinburgh bought up the estates and reconveyed them to his chief. Such loyalty, rising upon occasions even to foolhardy generosity, has always characterized the Robertsons, as witness the sacrifice of Donald Robertson who elected to be shot in place of his brother Alexander, the heir-presumptive to the chieftainship, at Preston, during the 'Fifteen.

In the Wars of Montrose the Clan Donnachaidh was wholeheartedly of the King's party. Alexander, the chief of Struan, was, however, a minor, and the Clan was actually led and the talisman carried by his uncle, Donald Robertson, surnamed the Tutor of Struan, at Inverlochry where the Clan earned its nickname of "the Tinkers of Atholl." The Clan was "out" once more in the abortive Glencairn rising of 1653. But it was Alexander the Poet Chief who had the unique distinction of being "out" in person in three risings on behalf of the exiled Stuarts. He had succeeded to the chieftainship in 1688 while still a student at St. Andrews, but in the following year, and much against the wishes of his mother, he joined the army of Dundee with six hundred men. He arrived too late for Killiecrankie, though he and his men played their part in the "bludie wark" that followed. As a consequence his estates were forfeited and he himself attainted. Thereafter he served for some years in the armies of Louis XIV. In 1704, however, Queen Anne remitted his attainder, and he returned to Scotland. In 1715 he joined the Earl of Mar and commanded a battalion at Sheriffmuir on November 13th, 1715. It was on the eve of this battle that Struan consulted the family oracle that he might learn the outcome of the threatening engagement and made the awful discovery that the Stone of the Standard was flawed, a sure presage of disaster to his family and to the Cause he had espoused. True to this omen, in the next day's battle not only was Struan's battalion routed by Argyll's horse but he himself was taken prisoner and only rescued by the gallantry of his near kinsman, Robert Bane Robertson of Invervack. The following year he was again captured, but on this occasion he managed to escape on the way to Edinburgh through the ingenuity of his termagant sister, the Black Lady Margaret. Once more he retired to France, and it was during this, his second

exile, that necessity compelled him to part with the golden case that for nearly four hundred years had enshrined the Stone of the Standard.

Despite the cracking of the Stone before Sheriffmuir the Clan was once more "out" with the Prince in '45. Alexander, then close on eighty years old, joined His Highness at Perth and was present at Preston Pans, though his advanced years compelled him to retire from the rising after the battle. His return to Dun Alastair, in Rannoch, partook of something of a triumphal progress for he travelled in "Johnnie Cope's" own coach, wearing the General's fur cloak and surrounded by a guard of Highlanders under the command of his old companion-in-arms, Robert of Invervack. Cope's carriage remained in the possession of the Robertsons of Struan for many years until a house-keeper in comparatively recent times, ignorant of its history, broke it up for firewood—another omen of misfortune.

On Alexander's death on April 18th, 1749, the chieftainship of the Clan devolved upon his kinsman, Duncan Robertson of Drumachine, then in exile in France, and the forfeited estates were not restored to the family until 1784. Thereafter the fortunes of the Robertsons of Struan steadily declined. For no more than two generations in succession did the chieftainship pass from father to son. Bit by bit, beginning with Dun Alastair, they parted with their estates.

It is obviously impossible at this date to settle which, if either, of the two versions of the family legend is the true one, though the general circumstances that immediately attended the discovery of the *Clach na Bratich* are probably correct enough. But as anyone who has made a study of such legends will appreciate, the second version—that which connects it with Bruce and Bannockburn—has that flavour of high romance redolent of the late eighteenth century. The earlier version, on the other hand, bears the hall-marks of authentic tradition founded substantially upon fact.

CHAPTER IX

STOCKS—

“One might fill a just volume with the histories of groves that were violated by wicked men, who came to fatal periods.”

JOHN EVELYN. *Sylva*, vol 11, p 249 (edit. 1908).

IN the religious history of the Aryan race in Europe the worship of trees has played an important part. Nothing could be more natural. For at the dawn of history Europe was covered with immense primaeval forests, and down to the first century before our era the Hercynian forest stretched eastward from the Rhine for a distance both prodigious and unknown.

Grimm's researches have rendered it probable that amongst the Germans the oldest sanctuaries were natural woods. And tree worship was undoubtedly practised by all the great European families of the Aryan stock. Their sanctuaries were green groves or woodland glades, and woe betide the hardy wight who dared to lay a vandal hand upon the trees. Even to break a twig was a sin; to cut a bough meant either his immediate extinction at the behest of the god or at least that he should become a cripple. And in more civilized states fines and other amercements were exacted from the violator of the sanctuary or the destroyer or maimer of a tree.

There is no necessity to labour the point, to extract the rules and penalties governing admission to the sacred groves, the means taken to preserve them. These matters are well known and proved beyond all doubt.

It is not difficult to see that in the course of time the sanctity of the grove was overtopped by the greater sanctity of the greatest tree in that grove. And the tree

itself became both the god and his habitat, in place of the wood; to it sacrifices were made, even the buds bursting on it were sacred. In such a tree we find the earliest natural talisman.

In the days of her greatness Rome was blessed with a plenitude of talismans. Some of these, the Ancile, the *Salvatio Romae* and the no less apocryphal Palladium that Æneas is said to have brought from burning Troy, are noticed elsewhere. But one of the most cherished possessions of the City down to the days of the Empire was the fig-tree of Romulus, the *Arbor Ruminalis*, in the shadow of which the she-wolf had suckled the twin sons of Mars and Rhea Silvia.¹ It had originally stood on Tiber bank below the Palatine Hill and by the mouth of the Lupercal grotto. Thence by divine aid it had been translated to the Comitium in the Roman Forum, but its original position was marked by a bronze group of the City's founders and their savage nurse. After standing for, so said legend, eight hundred and forty years it began in A.D. 58 to shew not very surprising signs of advanced decrepitude, a condition that was sufficient to cause consternation among the inhabitants of the Eternal City. Thanks, however, to the care of the priests responsible for its preservation it was replaced, presumably from slips of the old tree.

A second tree, a cornel, also associated with the name of Romulus, stood upon the Palatine Hill. It was believed to have sprung from the shaft of the javelin that Romulus had hurled thither from the slopes of the Aventine Hill. Plutarch assures us that if a passer-by noticed any sign of fading in its foliage the fearful news ran like wildfire through the City, bringing the populace with fire buckets as to a conflagration to revive the wilting talisman and avert impending disaster. It was destroyed accidentally in the days of Caius Caesar, who ordered certain repairs to the flight of steps that passed near to it. The workmen damaged the roots and within a short time the tree died.²

¹ Tacitus *Annals*, XIII, 58, Pliny *Natural History*, xv, 20. Representations of the tree are to be found both upon Roman coinage and on the marble reliefs in the Forum. E. Babelon *Monnaies de la République romaine*, II, 336 et seq., R. Lanciani *Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome*, 1897, p. 258.

² Plutarch *Romulus*, 20.

The oleaster, that stood in ancient times in the Forum at Megara, would also seem to have enjoyed something of the reputation of a talisman, for of this tree it had been prophesied that not until it brought forth armour in place of fruit would the City be conquered. Following, however, an ancient custom common to many primitive peoples, the Megareans had been wont to hang up their arms and bucklers in the branches of this tree, where in the course of time most of these trophies fell to pieces. Some few were, however, overlaid by the growing bark. Whether because of the prophecy or for some other reason, this practice fell into abeyance, but during the siege of Megara by Pericles, the natural decay of the tree or some accidental damage revealed the old trophies beneath the bark,¹ the dreaded portent of a tree putting forth armour. And a short while afterwards the prognostication was fulfilled and Megara yielded to the conqueror.

Belief in the quasi-sanctity of individual trees has survived even to the present day in certain places. Until 1859 there stood at Nauders, in the Tyrol, a sacred larch. Whenever it was cut it was thought to bleed. Furthermore it was held for true that the woodman's steel inflicted upon his own body an invisible wound of the same depth as that which he had given the tree, the effects of which would not cease until the bark had closed over the gash in the trunk.² This belief is obviously only a modification of that which, according to Lucan,³ made Caesar's soldiers afraid when he ordered them to hew down the sacred Druid grove of oaks at Marseilles. For they believed that their axes would rebound from the trunks and wound themselves.

The practice of cutting down the trees of a conquered pagan people was one that long survived, and instances of the destruction of these national emblems occur as late as the close of the sixteenth century. Charles IX of France, when he invaded Friesland, "cut down their woods, a punishment never inflicted by sober princes, but to prevent idolatry in the old land." And coming nearer home the

¹ Diodorus Siculus, Bk. xii.

² I. von Zingerle "Der heilige Baum bei Nauders"—*Zeitschrift für deutsch Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, vol. iv (1859), pp. 33 et seq.

³ Lucan *Pharsalia*, iii, pp. 429-431.

same treatment was meted out at the order of the Council of State to the elms in St. James' Park after the execution of King Charles in order that "his Majesty's houses already demolished, and marked out for destruction, his trees might likewise undergo the same destiny, and no footsteps of monarchy remain unviolated."¹

Reverence for these patriarchal trees and a reverence that is something more than a mere respect for a work of nature that is both beautiful and ancient is by no means dead among the populace even to-day. It is only at rare intervals, however, when these memorials are threatened with destruction, that this feeling makes itself manifest, and then the outsider is privileged to perceive that they are still regarded with the same feeling of awe mixed with affection, that was accorded to them and their ancestors a thousand and two thousand years ago. England is to-day still well supplied with trees associated with the names of the heroes, the kings and the great ones of the past. Strutt in 1822 produced two large volumes in which he celebrated these strays from the forests of the past, these landmarks immortalized in ancient charters, these memorials of royal visits and historic occasions.

One example must, however, serve our present purpose. Between the two bridges at Tilford and on a small green on the waste of the manor of Farnham, on the southern bank of the southern branch of the river Wey, in Surrey, stands the King's Oak.² As long ago as the middle of the thirteenth century, when Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, granted a charter to the monks of Waverley, there was an oak in Tilford, "which is called Kynghoc, by the king's highway towards Farnham," that formed one of the boundary marks of the monks' property. Modern criticism has decided for one reason or another that the so-called King's Oak should be known as Novel's Oak and that it has no connexion with the great tree that was old when Henry III was king. Such historical scruples, however, have little weight with the peasantry. Their memory is a long one. There was in days gone by a King's

¹ John Evelyn *Sylva*, vol. II, pp. 252 and 253.

² E. W. Brayley *History of Surrey*, edit. Edward Walford, vol. IV, pp. 332-333, Dugdale *Monasticon*, vol. I, p. 703, *Victoria and County History—Surrey*, vol. II, p. 593.

Oak in Tilford, and the oldest oak in Tilford must of necessity be that one, and it was regarded by them with a befitting reverence. When, therefore, on the death of John Thomas there came a new bishop to Winchester in 1781—Brownlow North (1741–1820), translated thither from Worcester by his brother, that Lord North who lost for us the American colonies—there was marked opposition by the good people of Tilford to his expressed intention to cut down their tree. What was the bishop's motive we do not know. He was reputed to be of an "amiable, generous, and yielding temper" which was often mistaken for weakness. But he did much to improve Farnham Park, and in 1817 he spent £6,000 upon the Castle. Maybe he held that the King's Oak was unsightly, and better out of the way. Perhaps he saw in it a supply of wood for his improvements in the Castle. But as say Manning and Bray, "the people in the Tything hold this tree in such great estimation, that . . . upon hearing it was the intention of the Bishop of Winchester to take it down, they drove in a great number of spikes and large nails to prevent its being cut"¹

Nowhere else in Europe does this belief in the sacredness of trees thrive as it does in Ireland. There the "gentle" places—raths, trees and stones that have long been believed to be the special resorts of the fairies—are still held inviolate. And though many of these localities have now been transferred to the guardianship of the saints, the conviction still persists that these sanctuaries must on no account be interfered with. Such meddling is bound to bring disaster to the guilty person. Elizabeth Andrews records that about eighty-five years ago, during the construction of the railway between Belfast and Ballymena, an old fort in the townland of Lenagh had to be removed. It was crowned with fairy bushes and before the actual digging could commence these had to be removed. In cutting down one of them one of the navvies met with an accident and the rest refused to go on with the work. In the end the fort had to be blown up. A second fort situated near Glasdrummer, in County Down, was destroyed for some reason or other by its owner, with disastrous consequences to those concerned in the deed. The man to strike the first blow was

¹ Manning and Bray *History of Surrey*

injured and died soon after, while the owner himself became a permanent invalid.¹

A similar belief attaches to the yew-tree which grows or grew in the cloisters of Muckross Abbey. Anyone having the temerity to pluck a branch will, according to local tradition, die within the ensuing twelvemonth.

The attitude of the Irish—indeed of all Kelts—to the destruction of trees on such sacred sites, whether devoted to the little people or to the saints of the Roman calendar, is well illustrated by a passage in the Rev. Caesar Otway's *Sketches in Ireland*.² In 1827 he visited Gougarnebarra, a small but deep lake away up in the mountains a few miles to the north of Bantry, in county Cork. It was on an islet in this lake that St. Finn Barre built himself an oratory; while in its depths he is reputed to have drowned a fearsome dragon, overlooked by St. Patrick when he purged the Emerald Isle of vermin and all noisome reptiles. This meritorious act was, however, only permitted on the condition that he founded a church upon the spot where the waters of the lake meet the flowing tide; and to this circumstance Cork Cathedral owes its beginning. But Gougarnebarra is doubly sanctified, for it was in a cell upon St. Finn Barre's Isle that Father Mahony lived a hermit for twenty-eight years; and there he died in 1728.

It was in response to some comment of the reverend tourist on the naked appearance of the mountain slopes about the lake that his guide, Cornelius, told him that in the old days "a squirrel could have hopped without touching ground, from oak to oak, and from birch to birch—from Inchigeela, all along here and up into the pass of Cooleagh, and so across the hills into Kerry, and until you get into Glen Flesk . . . and as for this blessed spot here, the trees were all safe, and standing until not very long ago. I have heard my mother tell how on a patron here, the boys and calleens used to dance under and about the big oak trees—Oh! but it was the jewel of a place for making a wedding. A greedy man here, who called these trees his own, though the Saint, even St. Finbarry himself, had surely the best right—he cut them all down, the bark was sent across the mountains to Nedeem, and sold to a

¹ Elizabeth Andrews *Ulster Folklore*, 1913, pp. 97 and 98

² Caesar Otway *Sketches in Ireland*, 1827, pp. 321-322

tanner there—he put it into his tanpits—he steeped all his hides—better he had plunged them in bog water; not as much as would heeltap a brogue, of leather, did he ever make out of them, they all rotted and went to dung. The man lost his money and his character and all—little better could happen the chap that would turn to filthy lucre the holy wood of Gougan Barry.”

As elsewhere in Europe so in ancient Ireland the grove was the temple and the sanctuary of the people, and the giant of the grove became the house of the god, and the god himself the tutelary deity of the tribe. Beneath its shade every chieftain was inaugurated. And when in the course of time Christianity displaced the ancient god, the tree yet stood, its one time office half-forgotten and overlaid by its acquired sanctity as the emblem of kingship. Hereditary kingship being unknown—in its generally accepted form—among the Irish the emblem was of the greater importance. Election in its shade gave the monarch that necessary *auctoritas et quasi maiestas quaedam* so essential. And when in later times the petty kings became hereditary lords under the benign rule of the Tudors, the ancient trees became their talismans, for the old electoral system still survived just as it does in the Coronation service to-day.

Such trees were known as *biles* if growing in a fortress. And their memory yet survives in such names as Lisnabilla in Antrim and Rathvilly in Carlow both meaning “the fortress of the ancient tree.” Beneath these sacred trees the petty kings of ancient Ireland were installed, and it would seem to have been accepted that the life of the king and possibly, by an easily understood extension, the survival of his line was bound up in that of the tree.

In the shadow of the *bile* of Magh-Adhair or Moyre, which stood in the Plain of Adoration at Adare in County Clare, the O'Briens, Chiefs of the Dal Gais and Kings of Thomond, were inaugurated down to the close of the tenth century. In 982, according to the *Four Masters*, Maelsechlainn, better known by the anglicized form of his name as Malachy the Great, King of all Ireland, taking advantage of the circumstance that Brian Boromhe, King of Cashel, was away in Ossory reducing to order Gillapatric, the recalcitrant king of that province, raided County

Clare; having ravaged the county he rounded off his expedition in the most fitting way possible by causing the inauguration tree to be uprooted and hewed in pieces. This act of sacrilege does not, however, seem to have prevented the O'Briens from continuing to use this spot for its age old purpose for another six hundred years¹

It was beneath another sacred tree, the Craobh Tulcha, that the kings of Ulidia were anciently inaugurated. And in 1099 Domhnall O'Lochlainn, a personable but unusually bloody-minded scoundrel even for the age in which he lived, on one of the many plundering expeditions which were counted to him for virtues, descended upon Ulidia and after defeating his enemies at Creeve and taking hostages from them, proceeded in the time honoured way to cut down the Craobh Tulcha. Twelve years later, in 1111, the Ulidians themselves were guilty of a similar sacrilege. They descended upon Tullaghoge, the inauguration place of the O'Neills, and cut down the grove of trees that surrounded the inauguration stone. For this act in which O'Lochlainn had also participated he was compelled to pay three thousand cows.

None of these inauguration trees is now known to exist. But long association with their native neighbours led many of the Anglo-Norman invaders to accept many of their beliefs; and an ancient tree is the talisman of the St. Laurences, one time Earls of Howth.

The founder of the family was a certain Sir Almaric de Tristram, who, if we can believe *The Book of Howth*, "amongst a thousand knights . . . might be chosen for beauty, stout-stomachhead, and stalworthness; for he was stout and sturdy to his peer, and humble and full of courtesy to his inferiors, and nothing would yield but in the way of gentleness"². This paragon of all the knightly virtues, who is called by the chroniclers indifferently Sir Almaric or Sir Tristram, was the brother-in-law and the companion in arms of the conqueror of Ulster, the redoubtable Sir John de Courcy. And when that stout knight was sent by Henry II. to assist in the reduction of the turbulent Irish beyond the Pale, Sir Almaric, like that other Tristram

¹ S. H. O'Grady *Caithream Thordhealbhaigh of Magrath*, p. 3.

² *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts—The Book of Howth*, edit. J. S. Brewer and William Bullen, 1871, p. 94.

the lover of La Beale Isoud, with whom he is said to have claimed kinship, took a "fair vessel, well victualled" and sailed for Ireland to make his fortune. He landed in 1176, and on St Laurence's Day in the following year he took part in a battle against the Ostmen of Dublin at the Bridge of Ivora, near Howth. On the eve of the battle, being, it would seem, somewhat doubtful of the result of the morrow's engagement, he made a vow to his patron saint, St Laurence, that if all went well he would change his name to that of his protector. St Laurence fully justified the faith placed in him by Sir Almaric; and St. Laurences the Lords of Howth remained for six hundred years. Furthermore, in memory of the day which won him a new name and lands in the Green Isle that he had forced to adopt him, Sir Almaric hung up in the great hall of the castle that he built at Howth the two-hand sword with which he had made his fortune. And there it hangs to-day like the "Sword of Strongbow" at Wexford, as evidence of the veracity of the legend. Unhappily this witness is scarcely reliable, for "Sir Almaric's" is a weapon of the middle or third quarter of the sixteenth century. Therefore if we have a mind to accept the tales of its reputed owner's prowess, we must pin our faith rather upon Giraldus Cambrensis, in whose pages they, true or false, are to be found set out at length.¹

The St. Laurences, like most Norman-Irish families, could—for they are now extinct in the male line and the present owner of the Castle, though he bears by royal licence the name and arms of St Laurence, was born a Gaisford of Offington—boast of many strange tales. In one it is told how one of the Lords of Howth was loved by the beautiful Geraldine O'Byrne, who in the guise of a mermaid was accustomed to swim over to the foot of the castle rock and then, changing her tail for the normal extremities, make her way to the Mermaid's Tower in the castle where she was met by her lover.² For which reason the arms of the St. Laurences are supported upon

¹ The Sword of Howth is illustrated on p. 5 of F. E. Bell's *Howth and its Owners, A History of County Dublin*, pt. v (1917). J. C. Walker in his *An Historical Essay on the Dress of the Irish*, 1788, p. 116, merely claims that it was the weapon of "a baron of Howth." Its association with Sir Almaric is to be found set forth, seemingly for the first time, in Lodge's *Peerage*, vol. III, p. 180.

² "The Mermaid of Howth Castle"—*Nation*, December 3rd, 1842.

one side by a mermaid. A second tells of "the rat that followed Lord Howth," a tale that was told to Tom Sheridan. Both stories exist in many forms, either separately or in combination.¹ But the one that I prefer, and it appears to be the original version following a recognized Teutonic model, relates that a St. Laurence in the very distant past fell in love with and married a strange lady of somewhat doubtful antecedents who reached his castle upon a raft in a state of exhaustion. She spoke a language that none knew and had the curious habit of turning herself into a rat for an unspecified number of days in every year, what time she used to sleep on her lord's pillow. Seemingly there were no cats or dogs about the castle in those days. So the Lady of Howth lived quite happily for a number of years, until, during one of her periodical transformations, some guest of her husband either in a drunken frolic or to rid his host of a pest, stuck his sword into a rat that ran across the room where they were drinking and found to his horror he had killed the lady. At all events a fearful scream was heard proceeding from the lady's chamber at the very moment the deed was done and when the guests and servants rushed in she was found dead with her throat cut. Stories of this kind went down very well in the Middle Ages; but it is to be feared that a modern jury would have wanted to know a good deal about the domestic relations of the Lord of Howth and his spouse.

The Howths, too, had a strange custom of leaving all their doors open at dinner time, a practice that was only put a stop to in the nineteenth century during the lifetime of the last Earl of Howth. Its origin has been traced, rightly or wrongly, to a visit paid by Grace O'Malley to Howth about the year 1575. Grace, better known as Grany O'Malley (1530?-1600?), was a pirate who made herself an unmitigated nuisance to Queen Elizabeth's Lieutenants. Sir Richard Bingham described her as "a notable traitress and nurse of all rebellions in the province for forty years." On one occasion she landed at Howth only to find the Castle gates closed against her, and was very angry at the dereliction of Irish hospitality.

¹ Samuel Rogers *Table Talk*, edit 1887, pp. 170-172. Other versions occur in the *Dublin Saturday Magazine*, vol. 1, pt. ii, p. 230, and in Jane and Anna Maria Porter's *Tales Round a Winter Hearth*, vol. 1, p. 69.

The heir of Howth, Christopher, who years after commanded the *Juan* at Carlingford, the grandson of Christopher the Blind Earl, was at the time either playing upon the shore or more probably out at nurse. Him she carried off to her stronghold near Borrisowle in co. Mayo and only gave him up on receipt of a large ransom, and the engagement that in future all doors should be left open during mealtimes.¹

Interesting as these anecdotes doubtless are, our present concern is with the family talisman of the St. Laurences, an ancient elm that stood, and maybe yet stands, though it should not, in the courtyard of the Castle of Howth by the Gate Tower and near the pool called Black Jack's Pond. So decrepit with age is it that for the best part of a century it has been necessary to prop it up with stays and barks of timber. It was formerly asserted that the Lords of Howth had had possession of their estates without diminution or increase from the earliest times, that they had never suffered attainder, and that the estates and title had never descended to a minor or a second son²—this last cannot be sustained—and all by virtue of this tree. With the death of each male of the house of St. Laurence, however, the tree was said to lose a branch—"By hand of Fate, predestinate, a limb that tree will shed,"—and when the last holder of the title should die it was foretold the tree itself would fall. When, in 1891, the Hon. Thomas Kenelm Digby St. Laurence, the heir, died, the last branch fell. His step-brother, the last and fourth Earl and thirteenth Baron, William Ulick Tristram, died unmarried on March 9th, 1909.

Belief that disaster in some form or another will follow inevitably upon the fall or destruction of an ancient tree is by no means dead even to-day, and at the end of the seventeenth century the superstition was very generally accepted by educated and uneducated men alike.

John Evelyn observes "that many such disasters have hap'ned to the owners of the places where goodly trees have been fell'd; I cannot forget one, who, giving the first stroke of the axe with his own hand (and doubtless pursuing

¹ John D'Alton *The History of the County of Dublin* 1838, p. 136

² John Lodge *Peerage of Ireland*, vol iii, p. 180 note.

it with more), kill'd his own father by the fall of the tree, not without giving the uncautious Knight (for so he was) sufficient warning to avoid it."¹ A second instance of the serious consequences befalling those guilty of such acts is also related by him. "I am told," he writes, "of the disasters which happened to the two men who (not long since) fell'd a goodly tree, call'd the Vicar's Oak, standing at No-Wood (not far from Croydon) partly belonging to the archbishop, and was limit to four parishes, which met in a point." It had been the practice of these two unnamed vandals to cut branches of mistletoe from the tree and sell them to an apothecary in London. The profits from this petty thievery led them to believe that they could make a good round sum by cutting down the tree and selling it, and thus they did. But one lost an eye and the other broke a leg either in the process or so soon afterwards as to lead Evelyn to believe that the matters were connected.² Considering that the two wretches had run the risk of a triple curse—they had cut the sacred mistletoe, had hewed down an ancient tree, and had removed a landmark—they got off remarkably lightly.

John Aubrey, a persistent collector of quaint anecdotes and "gothic" superstitions, records an unusually late instance of this belief—late that is for England—and of its dramatic consequences. "I cannot," he says, "omit taking notice of the great misfortune in the family of the Earl of Winchilsea, who at Eastwell, in Kent, felled down a most curious grove of trees near his own noble seat and gave the first blow with his own hands. Shortly after his countess died in her bed suddenly, and his eldest son, the Lord Maidstone, was killed at sea by a cannon ball."

Aubrey unfortunately does not say in what way the grove was "curious," nor have I been able to discover any signs of its one time existence or of any prehistoric remains at Eastwell. Aubrey has a very trying habit of leaving his tales half-told, the task of completing them falling to his commentators. And the annotations that in this instance I am able to supply, are not bulky. The Earl of Winchilsea to whom he refers was Heneage Finch,

¹ John Evelyn *Sylva*, edit 1908, vol II, p. 245

² John Evelyn *Sylva*, vol II, p. 250

the third Earl, who died in 1689. He was apparently somewhat given to destroying objects of antiquity and interest, and it was he who pulled down the cottage at Eastwell in which Richard Plantagenet, believed to have been the illegitimate son to Richard Crookback, passed his declining years and died in 1550.¹ The grove presumably stood on the spot where the Earl constructed "the circle with a star of walks radiating from it likewise exceeding pleasant", as noticed by Evelyn.² The Earl was married four times, and the Countess mentioned was seemingly his second wife—Mary Seymour, daughter of William, Duke of Somerset—who died in 1672. His son, William Lord Maidstone, was killed in an engagement with the Dutch on May 28th of the same year. It was the latter's posthumous son who succeeded as the fourth Earl. Of the third Earl's twenty-seven children only sixteen lived to "some maturity."

Towards the close of the seventeenth century there would appear to have been a surprising recrudescence of the belief in such arboreal talismans. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, writes of strange phenomena presaging the deaths of members of noble families from Rufus Nova, in Finland, to Cheshire, and among these he refers to the oak in "Lanthadran Park," Cornwall, "which foreshadows as much." And he again refers to this superstition in his *Admirable Curiosities*, asserting that "diverse ancient families in England are forewarned of their deaths by oaks bearing strange leaves." Heath, in his *Description of Cornwall*, extends the notice of this particular tree—"In Lanhadron Park there grows an oak that bears leaves speckled with white, as another, called Painter's Oak, grows in the hundred of East." "Lanthadran Park," now Lanshadron, is part of the manor of Heligan, "the place of the willows," which has belonged for some hundreds of years to the old Cornish family of Tremayne. The Park is now noted not for its willows or piebald oaks but for rhododendrons, while the old house, built in 1604, once a stately and picturesque building, was modernized in 1810 and in later years into one of surpassing ugliness.

Unhappily Burton gives us no list of these families,

¹ Edward Hasted. *History of Kent*, 1778-99, vol. III, p. 202 n.

² John Evelyn. *Sylva*, vol. II, p. 176.

but he can scarcely have been ignorant of the most celebrated of such talismans, at least in England. This is the gigantic limetree in the winding drive at Cuckfield Park, in Sussex, the prototype of the fatal tree at Rookwood Hall, in Harrison Ainsworth's novel of that name. From the talismanic tree of the Rookwoods a branch dropped on the approaching death of every member of the family, while it is to be presumed its fall presaged their extinction. Such at least is the legend of the lime at Cuckfield Park, and as a consequence the Sergisons of Cuckfield have carefully protected their palladium in a way befitting such a family guardian.

The "venerable structure of Cuckfield Park, its old garden, and in particular the noble park with its shadowing prospects, its picturesque views of the hall . . . its deep glades through which the deer come lightly tripping down, its uplands, slopes, brooks, brakes, coverts, and groves," which moved Ainsworth to lyrical enthusiasm, formed a part of the vast estates of John, the last Earl of Warrenne, who died in 1346. It was entailed upon his nephew, Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, the son of his sister Alice. And from the Fitzalans it passed in moieties by the marriage of heiresses to the Mowbray Dukes of Norfolk and the Coverts; the Earls of Derby and the Bowyers; and the Barons and Earls of Abergavenny—to the Sergisons by purchase. It was Charles Sergison, born in 1654, a Commissioner for the Royal Navy, who bought the Elizabethan manor house and one moiety of the manor about 1690, while his collateral descendants, who had taken the name of Sergison, added the other two moieties in the eighteenth century. And it is the Sergisons whose fate is foretold by the great lime tree in the avenue.

In Scotland the hawthorn is or was regarded with peculiar veneration, and there exist records of at least two trees of this kind that have achieved for themselves very justifiable reputations as "lucks." Until the early years of last century an old thorn-tree stood near the village of Earlstoun, the Erceldoune from which True Thomas took his name. Of it the Rhymer is said to have prophesied,

"This thorn-tree, as lang as it stands,
Earlstoun shall possess a' her lands."

The lands which once belonged to the community of Earlistoun have in the course of years been alienated piecemeal, until scarcely an acre remains. And the thorn-tree itself fell during the night of a great storm in the spring of 1821.¹

Why a thorn should be regarded as peculiarly fortunate I do not know. But Reinsberg-Düringsfeld notes that in Bohemia on Walpurgis Night it was customary to lay branches of any bramble or thorny tree, gooseberry, hawthorn or wild rose on the thresholds of cowhouses in order that the witches might be caught by the thorns and so prevented from doing any mischief.² The Saxons of Transylvania have a similar custom, but the occasion of its performance is the eve of St. George's Day.³ Any thorny trees may therefore be regarded as a protection against witchcraft and ill-luck; and no doubt there was to mediaeval minds some connexion between all hawthorns and the Crown of Thorns.

Large old hawthorns, whether growing singly in a field or by an ancient well, are, moreover, held peculiarly sacred, for the fairies dance about them at night. None would dream of cutting them down. St. Patrick's Stone, which stands on an island in the Shannon, is hollowed at the top and shaded by a hawthorn. The water that collects in the hollow is believed to be medicinal.⁴

On occasions the mediaeval architects of domestic buildings took advantage of nature and built their houses even about growing trees. In the kitchen of the Old Manor House at Knaresborough, on the Nidd, in Yorkshire, is the stem of an old oak that rises through the ceiling into one of the upper bedrooms where the top is cut off to form a table.⁵ And Davy, writing about 1773, asserts that at Huntingfield, in Suffolk, the Great Hall was originally built about six straight and massive growing oaks.⁶

It is obvious that when the trees died, rotted and collapsed the house about them did the same. Yet no

¹ Robert Chambers *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, edit 1870, p. 223.

² Otto von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld *Fest-Kalender aus Böhmen*, 1862, p. 210.

³ J. Haltrich. *Zur Volkskunde der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, 1885, p. 281 (Frazer. *Witchcraft*, p. 338).

⁴ Lady Wilde *Ancient Legends of Ireland*, p. 185.

⁵ *The Standard*, November, 13th, 1905.

⁶ Charles Davy *Letters*, 1787, vol. 1, p. 239.

tradition of talismanic properties is associated with the foregoing. But a similar belief to that attaching to the Tree of Howth is associated with the hawthorn tree which grows in the dungeon of the Castle of Cawdor, near Nairn.

In 1454 William, Thane of Cawdor, *familiaris scutifer Regis*, and Crown Chamberlain beyond Spey, received letters from James II King of Scots, granting him licence to build his castle of Cawdor and to fortify it. Lachlan Shaw, the earliest printed authority for the legend, relates that¹—"Tradition beareth, that the Thane was directed in a dream to build the Tower round a hawthorn-tree on the bank of the brook." Be this as it will, there is in the lowest vault of the Tower, the trunk of a hawthorn-tree, firm and sound, growing out of the rock, and reaching to the top of the vault. Strangers are brought to stand round it, each one to take a chip of it, and then to drink to the Hawthorn-tree, i.e., "Prosperity to the Family of Calder."² Innes, however, furnishes an extension of the story "yet vouched by the constant tradition of the castle."³ Thane William was apparently in considerable doubt as to the most suitable site for his contemplated fortress, though he had gathered all the treasure necessary to cover the cost of the building. His doubts were, however, resolved by his dream, wherein he was told to pack all his treasure in a coffer, place it on the back of an ass and let the animal loose; and where it stopped there should he build his great house. The beast wandered forth followed by the omen-seeking thane until it came to the banks of a pleasant stream where three hawthorn trees grew. At the first it looked; against the second it rubbed itself; but beneath the third it lay down.

The first and the second hawthorn trees stood about one hundred yards from the castle and only "fell within the last forty years" says Innes in 1859. One actually disappeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the other in 1836.⁴

¹ Lachlan Shaw *A History of the Province of Moray*, edit 1882, vol. II, p. 270.

² The usual form of the toast is or was "Freshness to the Hawthorn Tree of Cawdor."

³ Cosmo Innes *The Book of the Thaness of Cawdor*, p. 17—Spalding Club, 1859.

⁴ Shaw *A History*, etc., vol. II, p. 270.

The chest in which the treasure is supposed to have been carried upon the ass's back is yet preserved in the barrel-vaulted dungeon at Cawdor, close by the hawthorn tree.¹

Thane William died in 1468 and it was the marriage of his great-grand-daughter, Muriel, about 1510, with Sir John Campbell that brought Cawdor into the possession of the family of the present Earl of Cawdor.

Though not strictly a "stock," it would seem not inappropriate to include in this place that famous Border "luck," the Coalstoun Pear, since it is presumed to be of vegetable origin. It was long preserved as a talisman by the family of Broun of Coalstoun, at Coalstoun House, upon Coalstoun Water, two and a quarter miles south of the town of Haddington.

The legend of the Pear is as follows:—In the middle of the thirteenth century the Lord of Yester was one Hugh de Giffard. Like his contemporary the "wondrous Michael Scott" he was "singularie philosophic, astronomiae ac medicinae laude prestans." And like him he enjoyed among his neighbours the reputation of being a warlock—"dicebatur penitissimos magiae recessus indagasse." But unlike his greater fellow student, Hugh de Giffard has never been credited with such stupendous feats of wizardry as have rendered the other's name world famous. Nevertheless in the opinion of his contemporaries he was a mage of "muckle might," and if he knew not—

"The words that cleft Ealdon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone,"

he knew so much of the Forbidden Art that he was able thereby, not only to build the walls and donjon of his castle of Yester, but to hollow out beneath it the great cavern called Bo-hall (that is Hobgoblin Hall)—

"cujus castrum, vel saltem caveam et dongionem, arte
daemonica antiquae relationes ferunt fabrifactum: nam
ibidem habetur mirabilis specus subterraneus, opere

¹ An engraving of the tree and chest, the latter being of the seventeenth century, is reproduced in *The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 18.

mirifico constructus magno terrarum spatio protelatus, qui communiter BO-HALL appellatus est.”¹

According to the family legend Hugh de Giffard had one daughter, who was wooed by one of the Brouns of Coalstoun. And when matters had proceeded between the young people to a highly satisfactory conclusion, Broun visited the magician to obtain his consent to their marriage and to discover what dowry the latter proposed to give his girl. The suitor found the old man wandering in his orchard. And in reply to the wooer's query he plucked a pear from a tree and handed it to him with the words—“This is my daughter's dower. So long as it is preserved, your lands, which will go to her descendants, will remain intact.”

Centuries later, towards the close of the eighteenth century, so continues the legend, the bride of one of the Brouns, wishing to see what would happen if the Pear were divided, tried to bite a piece from it. After five hundred years the talisman had shrivelled until it seemed no more than a fragment of hard wood, and the only result of the young woman's attempt was to leave an impression of her teeth on the relic. Nevertheless so potent was the curse placed upon the Pear by the long dead magician that within a very short time some unspecified calamity fell upon the family which compelled them to part with a considerable parcel of their land. Needless to say since then the Pear has been carefully preserved locked in a silver casket to prevent any further experiments by inquisitive young ladies of the family.²

Whether as the result of the frustrated attempt to bite the Pear or not, it was not long before the Brouns ceased to exist, though the wizard's prophecy was fulfilled in that the lands of Coalstoun still belong to the descendants

¹ Fordun *Chronicles*, Lib. x, cp. 21, David Dalrymple *Annals*, edit. 1797, vol. III, p. 335. Fordun gives the date of Hugh de Giffard's death as 1267.

² E. B. Simpson (*Folk Lore* p. 181) and other writers describe the warlock as Adam Gifford. Miss Simpson also asserts that the relic has now been deposited in a bank. Locally the luck is said to be still in the house.

Another version of the legend asserts that the gift was made on the way to church for the wedding, and that Hugh halted the bridal procession beneath a pear-tree from which he plucked the talisman.

of his daughter. In 1805 Christian, only child and heiress of Charles Broun of Coalstoun, married George, ninth Earl of Dalhousie. And in 1863 Georgina, daughter and co-heiress of James Andrew, tenth Earl and first Marquess of Dalhousie, married the Hon. Robert Bourke, created Lord Connemara in 1887, whom she divorced in 1890, and it is in the possession of this family that the Luck and Coalstoun House remain.

In every other way an entirely admirable family legend, it possesses only two disadvantages—no Broun ever married a De Giffard or Gifford; and the Pear did not come into the possession of the Brouns of Coalstoun until the early part of the sixteenth century. The story of the inquisitive young woman who tried to bite the talisman may, however, be true; the marks of teeth which I understand can be seen on the Pear would at least seem to shew that there is something in the story.

Yester and the Pear, if the latter was in existence at the time, were inherited by Joanna the eldest of the four daughters and co-heiresses of Hugh Gifford of Yester, who about 1350 or 1360 married Sir Thomas de Hay; and in the possession of the Hays of Lockerworth the estate remained until the reign of James IV. In or about 1510 both Yester and the Pear passed by the marriage of Marion (*d.* 1564) daughter of John, second Lord Hay of Yester (1469/70–1513), with George Broun of Coalstoun (*d.* before February, 1519/20), to the Brouns of Coalstoun.¹

The talismanic properties of the Coalstoun Pear must be based upon some primitive belief; but it is one that has apparently left no other discoverable trace in northern Europe. This Border Pear is seemingly unique. Frazer has, however, pointed out that the Circassians regard the pear-tree as the protector of cattle.² No doubt in very early times the protection of the tree-god embraced the whole family and not its beasts alone. It is conceivable also that the outstanding property of the apple was transferred to the pear. Among the Germans the apple was held

¹ Douglas' *Scots Peerage*, edit James Balfour Paul, 1911, vol viii, pp 422 and 434.

² Frazer *The Magic Art*, vol ii, pp 55 and 56 quoting—Potocki *Voyage dans les steppes d'Astrakhan et du Caucase*, 1829, vol i, p 309

to bring fruitfulness in woman and beast. Since in a primitive family the essence of good fortune lay in the healthiness of its cattle and in a numerous progeny it is not improbable that the pear may have been held at some period to ensure these benefits.

CHAPTER X

—AND STONES

“ Unless the fixed decrees of fate give way,
The Scots shall govern and the sceptre sway
Where'er this stone they find, and its dread sound obey ”¹

ON or by a consecrated stone it was an ancient Eastern custom to appoint kings or chieftains to their offices. Abimelech was made king by the stone² that Joshua had set up beneath the sacred oak in the sanctuary at Shechem.³ And when Jehoiada's conspiracy had resulted in the crowning of young Joash, Athaliah, the queen, found her supplanter standing “at his pillar at the entering in” surrounded by the princes of the people.⁴

Subsequently and among the northern peoples the practice was to form a circle of large stones, generally twelve in number, about the stone of inauguration. On these, which at the same time formed a barrier to the commonalty during the ceremony of inauguration, the electors took their seats. Traces of this practice are to be found in the chronicles of every European country, and in many places the memory of such stones, on occasion even the stones themselves, have survived. Æneas Sylvius, who ascended the chair of St. Peter as Pius II and died in 1464, gives a lengthy and detailed account of the ceremony with which the Dukes of Carinthia were installed upon the sacred stone which stood in the plain near St. Veit.⁵ Seven stones mark the spot at Lahnstein, near Coblenz, where

¹ This is the popular version of the prophecy—a translation from a passage in Boece—relating to the Stone of Destiny in the Coronation Chair. The last phrase does not appear in any ancient version of his chronicle.

² *Judges* ix, 6

³ *Joshua* xxiv, 26 and *Genesis* xxxv, 4

⁴ *2 Chronicles* xxiv, 13

⁵ The stone is still to be seen at Zollfell (Gilbert and Churchill. *Dolomite Mountains*, p. 483.)

the Emperors were inaugurated by the Electors, the imperial seat bearing the name of the *Königstuhl*. Sweden's ancient kings were installed until the time of Gustavus Vasa upon the *Morasten* that stands upon the Grave of Odin near Upsala, and at every successive ceremony a new stone carved with the name of the latest sovereign was added to the circle of lesser stones that surrounded it. A similar ceremony within a ring of stones marked the inauguration of the kings of Denmark.¹

Edmund Spenser, the poet, had witnessed such ceremonies of inauguration during his residence in Ireland. "They use to place him that shall be their Captaine," he writes in his *A View of the present State of Ireland*,² "upon a stone alwayes reserved for that purpose, and placed commonly upon an hill: in many of the which I have sene the fote of a man formed and graven, which they say was the measure of ther first Captaines foot, wheron he standing receiveith an oath to preserve all the former auncient customes of the country inviolable, and to deliver up the succession peacably to his Tanist."

One such stone, marked by two cavities, stands near Derry. On it were inaugurated the ancient Kings of Ulster, but a legend of comparatively recent origin now associates the stone with the name of St. Columba and claims the depressions as the foot-prints of the Saint.³ And on the MacMahon Stone in Monaghan the impression of *one* foot was to be seen as late as 1809.⁴

Few of these inauguration stones can, however, be regarded as the palladia of the countries in which they stood, can be held to be the talismans of the lines of kings or princes who were placed upon them at their inauguration. Such a character, however, very easily developed out of their primary function. And the numberless occasions on which it is recorded that it was thought necessary by conquerors to overthrow and destroy these symbols, afford ample proof that this secondary character was frequently understood to be inherent in them even if the belief was not openly expressed.

¹ Saxo Grammaticus *History of Denmark*, transl. Elton and Powell, p. 16.

² 1596, II, 278-286.

³ *Ordnance Survey of Londonderry*, p. 233.

⁴ Shirley. *Farnley*, p. 74.

The inauguration stone of the O'Neills, which stood within the Rath of Tullaghoge, to the north of their vanished castle at Dungannon, and was last used when Hugh O'Neill, the traitor Earl of Tyrone, was proclaimed in September, 1595, was destroyed by Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, the Lord Deputy in 1602. And its destruction coincided with the waning of the power of the house of the great O'Neills and with the extinction of the family. For though the Earl was much married and was the father of a round dozen of legitimate sons (besides a whole host of bastards) not one lived to survive him and bear his title.

Much the same fate befell the Chair and the family of the O'Neills of Castlereagh, though the Chair itself is, or was when Jones wrote his *Crowns and Coronations*, preserved by a family in Sligo.¹ On the Hill of Castlereagh, about two miles from Belfast, was the great house of Con O'Neill,² chief of the O'Neills of Clandeboy, and nearby stood the stone called the Chair of the O'Neills. Con, who is often referred to in documents of the time as "the Queen's pensioner," owned wide estates in Ulster which brought him in the huge income of £12,000 a year. All went well with him until a few weeks before the Queen's death, when, Sir Arthur Chichester being Lord Deputy, Con and his two brothers and many friends had "a grand debauch" at Castlereagh. In the middle of the entertainment the drink ran short, and some of Con's servants, themselves very drunk, were despatched to Belfast with "runlets" to fetch more. There they were soundly beaten up by the garrison, who added insult to injury by making free with Con's wine, before despatching them empty-handed to Castlereagh. Con was furious and sent them back once more to exact vengeance on those "Boddagh Sasonagh soldiers" as he termed them. In the resulting fracas one soldier was killed and several of both parties wounded. And it was only a few days before O'Neill found himself a prisoner in the Castle of Carrickfergus, condemned for having levied war against the State.³ With the aid,

¹ pp. 104 and 105

² Con of Castlereagh has frequently been confused with his distant kinsman Con Bacach (the lame) O'Neill, the first Earl of Tyrone, who died about 1559

³ William Montgomery *The Montgomery Manuscripts*, 1830, p. 21-22

however, of Thomas Montgomery of Blackstone, who was well-known as a trader in grain at Carrickfergus, and who seduced, under the promise of marriage, the daughter of the Town Marshal of Carrickfergus—in this way matters were arranged in those days—he escaped to Largs in Scotland, and there he entered into an agreement with James Hamilton and Hugh Montgomery that if they could secure his peaceful return to his lands he would grant them two-thirds of his property.

Con, at his death, which occurred shortly after 1612, was only able to leave one-third of his estates to his two sons Daniel and Con Oge, and this meagre remnant was shortly filched from them by Hamilton and Montgomery, who on the strength of their ill-gotten wealth had become Viscount Clandeboye and Viscount Ards respectively. Thereafter with only £160 a year between them, Daniel and Con left their ancestral home and sought fortune at the Court and in the Army. Con, who took part in the rebellion of 1641, was killed at Clones in 1643 by a Presbyterian minister after quarter had been given. Daniel was more fortunate. He attached himself first to King Charles I., and later served King Charles II., by whom, on his happy Restoration, he was made Postmaster-General, and he married Catherine, the eldest daughter of Thomas, second Baron Wotton, created Countess of Chesterfield. He, however, died childless in 1664, when his line became extinct.

Meanwhile, in the disturbances in Ireland, the Chair of the O'Neills had been thrown down. In 1663 when the Old Market House of Belfast was being built, the Chair was brought to Belfast and built into the wall of this building, and when the Market House was pulled down in the middle of last century, the Chair came into the possession of a family of Rathcarrick in county Sligo.¹

Wirt Sikes records a late instance of the fulfilment of the belief that disaster in some form or another will inevitably follow the removal of a stone of this character. The late Lady Mackworth, when building a grotto at her house near Neath, removed the Stone of Banwan Bryddin, which

¹ Jones states that the removal of the Chair took place in 1750 and that the Market House was built in that year. The latter part of his statement is certainly

bore the inscription, *Marcus caritini filius Bericu*, and stood upon the summit of a tumulus, believed to be the resort of fairies. Scarcely had the grotto been completed when a violent storm broke over the district and in the flood and landslide that followed, the grotto was swept away amid the mocking laughter of the fairies.¹

The two most celebrated of all inauguration stones are Fal, the Stone of Tara, that, according to the writer of *Dindshenchas*, "used to utter a cry beneath the feet of every king that took Ireland,"² and the Stone of Destiny, which forms the seat of Saint Edward's Chair in Westminster Abbey. About both of them in the past gathered a host of legends and superstitions, about both of them in the present have been written small libraries. Mediaeval legend was accustomed to identify them, and even Scottish antiquaries and historians have endorsed this view. But Petrie and Mr. Macalister have proved—or at all events gone as near proof as we are ever likely to get—that Fal still stands upon the Hill of Tara, and to-day marks the grave of some insurgents killed in 1798.³ I do not think that any iconoclast has ever attempted to prove that the Stone of Destiny and Fal are not the same. But it has long been recognised that the stone of which the former is composed is the same as that of which parts of Dunstaffnage is built, and that its counterpart is not to be found anywhere near Tara.

According to legend embodied in *The Book of Invasions* the Stone of Fal was not native to Tara, nor was it destined to remain there forever. It was said to have been brought to Ireland by the divine race of the Tuatha de Danann, and that it, together with the invincible Spear of Lug, the unconquerable Sword of Nuadu, and the inexhaustible Chaldron of the Dagda, formed the Regalia of the Kings

¹ Wirt Sikes *British Goblins*, pp. 374-375.

² Dean Stanley (*Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, edit. 1882, p. 51) is in error when he writes that—"If the chief was a true successor, the stone was silent, if a pretender, it groaned aloud as with thunder." He was following Ware *Antiquities of Ireland* (Harris) 1764, vol. 1, pp. 10 and 124. According to a late version of *The Book of Invasions* "there was a demon in the stone, who uttered a cry, down till the birth of Christ, but thereafter it was silent, for the power of demons was broken when Christ was born."

³ *Tara* pp. 30 and 134-142. Fal was identified with this stone by Petrie "History and Antiquities of Tara"—*Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xviii, pt. 1, pp. 159-161.

of Tara. Each of these talismans was brought from one of the mythical cities, Gorias, Finneas, Murias and Falias, in which the Tuatha de Danann learned their wizardry.¹ A second legend ascribes to it a very different origin. In the story called *Baile an Scail* we read of the three Druids, Moel, Blocc, and Blucne, who tell Con of the Hundred Battles that the Stone came from the land of Inis Fo-aíl and that it was destined at some future date to find its way to Taltiu in the present county of Meath.² An examination of the stone, which Mr. Macalister believes to be Fal, revealed a structure that suggested that it had originally come from the mountains to the south of Dublin, and Mr. Macalister suggests that its original home was the Isle of Inis Fail, in Wexford harbour, now known as Beggery Island, a corruption of Beg-Eire or "little Ireland."

Such speaking stones were by no means uncommon.³ Apart from those at Tara and Scone—the latter's one time vocalty would appear to be an attribute derived from its former identification with Fal—there was a third, the Llechlafar, at St. David's, in South Wales. It spanned the Alan, at the north-west approach to the Cathedral churchyard, and of it Merlin had prophesied—"Angliae regem, Hiberniae triumphatorem, ab homine cum rubra manu in Hibernia vulneratum, per Meneviam redeundum, super Lechlavar moriturum." When Henry II returned from Ireland at Easter, 1172, a Welshwoman whose petition he had rejected applied this prediction to him, "Vindica nos hodie, Lechlavar, vindica genus et gentem de homine hoc." Henry approached the primitive bridge and with the words—"Merlino mendaci quis de cetero fidem habeat?" passed scatheless across and made his orisons at the shrine of St. David.⁴

Dr. Whitley Stokes discovered and published a second and Irish version of the prophecy and the incident. According to this late and very distorted recension Merlin had

¹ *Book of Invasions*

² O'Curry *Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, p. 618.

³ Mr. Macalister suggests that the Voice of Fal was produced by a "bull-roarer" wielded by the priest in whose hands the choice of the King lay (*Tara*, p. 137 *et seq.*)

⁴ Giraldus Cambrensis *Expugnatio Hibernica*, Lib. 1, cap. xxxviii, *Chronicles and Memorials* No. xxi, vol. v. See also Jones and Freeman *The History and Antiquities of St. David's*, p. 222 and note.

prophesied that the stone would speak under a king who should conquer Ireland, and Henry I. on some visit to St. David's, determined to put the matter to the test. The vocal capabilities of the stone were first tested by placing a dead body on it when the *corpse* promptly spoke. Thereafter Henry himself stood upon the stone which remained obstinately silent much to the king's annoyance.

This version, which is apparently of the late fifteenth century, only embodies one matter of interest and value. It refers to the Speaking Stone of St. David's as "like unto the Lia Fail which is in Tara," proof that Fal had not left his home as late as that date.

A third legend identifies Fal with the stone upon which Jacob rested his head at Bethel when he was vouchsafed the vision of the ladder leading up to Heaven, and it goes on to relate that at some unspecified time the sacred stone was taken to Jerusalem and placed in the second Temple, that of Hezekiah. Therein it follows a tradition current among Mohammedans to-day. Presumably it was the foundation stone of the Temple, the only object in the Holy of Holies. Under the title of the Stone of Unction it is still preserved in one of the Mosques of Jerusalem. The Crusaders, however, identified the Sakrah—"the Threshing Floor of Araunah"—which forms the summit of the Temple Rock with Jacob's pillow, and in the days of the Christian kingdom the great Church of the Dome of the Rock was decorated within with frescoes depicting Jacob's vision.

The legend then goes on to relate that when the City of Jerusalem fell before the hosts of Babylon, two of the daughters of Zedekiah, the last king of Jerusalem, escaped the general massacre of the royal family and fled under the guidance of the prophet Jeremiah, first to Egypt and then to Ireland, bringing with them both the Stone of Jacob and the Ark of the Covenant. The former they set up upon the Hill of Tara; the latter they buried beneath it. Now the traditions of Tara enshrine the names of two women, Tephi and Tea, who are said to have come from Spain. Tephi, according to some legends, was the daughter of Bachter "king of Spain," whatever that originally meant, while Tea was the wife of Eremon, the leader of the Milesian expedition that came from Spain and conquered Ireland,

and she was, moreover, the founder of Tara and was buried there. The temptation to identify the fugitive princesses, unhistorical daughters of Zedekiah, with the mythical Irish heroines, proved in modern times irresistible to those strange beings who advocate the doctrine known as British-Israel—Mr. Macalister describes the doctrine as “an abortion begotten of unscholarly ignorance of the nature of the Biblical historical record, upon unbridled national bumptiousness” And they, or certain members of the cult, accepted this gorgeous hotch-potch of legends as sober fact. It was belief in “this pestilent nonsense” that led many years ago to the destruction of one of the circles upon the Hill. Some bright soul who had accepted the belief that the Ark was in Tara, though not believing in “British-Israel,” inspired the then proprietor to search for it. A third member from Scotland joined the party, inspired by a dream. And despite and possibly because of protests from the Board of Works, the then guardian of Ancient Monuments, the cheerful vandals proceeded to tear the site in pieces beyond hope of restoration, of course without the hoped-for result. The spot selected was the *Fort of the Synods* just north of the *Mound of the Hostages*.¹

The legend of the Coronation Stone in Westminster Abbey, that Edward Longshanks brought from Scotland—

“ the fatis marbell stone,
The kingis sait and the triumphall trune
Quhairon the kingis crounit war in Scune ”²

to be coherent must be something of a patchwork, a scrap from our old gossip Holinshed, a few lines from Hector Boece, a paragraph from an ancient chronicle, a stanza from a hoary epic. What does it matter? No one pretends to-day that any of it is true. One legend is as good as another, and the old tale-tellers had no scruples about borrowing from one another—and without acknowledgements either.

Let us begin with Holinshed, for he gives us a fine circumstantial lie, full of facts and well-sounding names.

¹ R. A. S. Macalister *Tara*, pp. 31–33, Rev. J. (afterwards Archdeacon) Healy, D.D., in the *Dublin Express*, 21st August, 1899.

² Boece *Cronykylis*, III, 194.

He, like all others has, however, omitted to put on record for the benefit of posterity how the stone on which the patriarch Jacob rested his head at Luz, when he was vouchsafed the vision of the ladder up to Heaven and that he afterwards set up as a testament, came to Egypt. In Egypt, however, it was found by one Gathelus, "the sonne of Cecrops, who builded the city of Athens." Gathelus married Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh, "ane virgin clene, ryght fair of nobill fame," and resided for some time in Egypt. But the plagues that Moses brought upon that unhappy country induced him to move westwards, and eventually he arrived in Spain, where, "having peace with his neighbors, he builded a cite called Brigantia [Compostella], where he sat upon his marble stone, gave lawes, and ministered justice unto his people, thereby to maintaine them in wealth and quietnesse"¹ Elsewhere in his *Hystorie of Scotland* Holinshed says that King Simon Brech, the favourite son of Milo the Scot, brought the Stone to Ireland about seven hundred years before the birth of Christ.² Thence in the reign of Muirheartach Mac Earc in 330 B.C. it was "sent into Argyle by his [Muirheartach's] brother Fergus,"³ and set up at Dunstaffnage Castle, and in the vaults of that Castle may yet be seen a hollowed place where it is said to have lain. There it achieved some little fame as a great talisman perhaps because, as Holinshed says, "first in Spaine, after in Ireland, and then in Scotland, the kings which ruled over the Scottishmen [the descendants of "Scota, the fairy princess"] received the croune sittinge upon that stone." As the Scots moved eastwards the stone went with them, and Kenneth II in A.D. 840 removed it from Dunstaffnage to Scone and there set it up upon a mound, the Hill of Recognition, "because that the last battle with the Picts was

¹ *The Hystorie of Scotland*, edit, 1585, p. 31, Weever, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 239

² Portions of another legend seem to have been interpolated here. According to one version the stone was thrown out of the ship to act as an anchor, according to another it was brought up by the grapnel from the bottom of the sea when the ship of Brech was forced to anchor during a storm.

³ If there be any substratum of truth in this legend, if the stone did indeed come originally from Ireland, the king responsible for its removal must have been Fergus [II.] Mor who died in 501. He was the son of Earc and became the first Dalriad King of Argyle and the Isles, which he invaded about 495 or 498. The historical Muirheartach mor mac Earca (d. 533) was his contemporary and the step-uncle of St. Columba.

there fought,"¹ at the same time placing it in a wooden chair.

For four hundred and fifty years, says Boece "all Kingis of Scotland war ay crounit quhil ye tyme of Kyng Robert Bruse. In quhaus tyme, besyde mony othir crueltis done be Kyng Edward Lang Schankis, the said chier of merbyll was taikin be Inglismen, and brocht out of Scone to London, and put in to Westmonistar, quhaer it remains to our dayis." Edward took the castle of Edinburgh at the beginning of June, 1296, and sent thence three coffers of royal treasure, plate and gem-set vessels to Westminster. From Edinburgh he marched to Aberdeen and on his return by Perth he visited Scone at the beginning of August. Thence he took the "*petra magna super quam reges Scocie solebant coronari.*" At Westminster it was placed near the altar, before the Shrine of St Edward, in a new chair made in 1300-1301 for the occasion by Walter, the king's painter—"ad assedendum ibidem juxta feretrum St. Edwardi in quadam cathedra lignea deaurata quam Rex fieri precepit (ut Reges Angliae et Scocie infra sederent die coronationis eorum) ad perpetuam rei memoriam."

Bruce made no attempt to get the chair back during the life of the man who had taken it to England, but in 1324 he appealed to Edward II to restore to Scotland "the famous stone, which King Edward, senior, had placed near the tomb of St. Edward," urging that "Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh, had brought it from Egypt; she gave her name to the land which was before called Albion, and Moses had prophesied that victory should follow the stone."

This was not a particularly tactful way of approaching the man whom he had but a decade earlier trounced so soundly at Bannockburn. And Edward no doubt thought that if the Scots could do these things lacking the aid of their precious Stone, it was much better for England if they continued to be without it. Edward III. however, seems to have contemplated its restoration pursuant, no doubt, to the terms expressed and implied by the Treaty of Northampton signed in 1328, which recognized Bruce as an independent monarch. The Regalia of Scotland

¹ Holinshed, p 132

was restored, and on July 1st the Abbot and Monks of Westminster were ordered to give up the Chair and Stone and hand them over to Isabella the Queen mother. For some reason or other the idea was abandoned.

At what period the nebulous beliefs in the talismanic property of the Stone of Fate first crystallized out into definite prophecies we do not know. Jones gives an early version from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library,¹

"En Egipte Moise a le poeple precha,
Scota la file fata ou bien l'escota,
Quare il dite en espirite, qui ceste pierre avera
De molt estraunge terre conquerour serra "

The Stone at one time bore on its upper surface a bronze plate inscribed with the distich,

"Ni fallat Fatum, Scoti, quocumque locatum
Invenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem,"

rendered in the later metrical version of Boece's *Chronicles*,

"This fallall stone, sic fortune has ane werd,
Quhair it was brocht in ony land or erd,
Into that land Scot ay suld be king,
Of verrie det the Scottis thair suld ring."

Bellenden's translation is rather neater,

"The Scottis sall brwke that realme as native ground,
Geif weirdis falll nocht, quhairever this chair is found."

The lines are traditionally said to have been engraved to the order of King Kenneth in the year 840. This is manifestly impossible, but they cannot have been engraved after the removal of the Stone from Scone—no English king of the Middle Ages could possibly have consented to such an act—and they must therefore be of the thirteenth century or somewhat earlier, an interesting piece of evidence as to the age of the tradition as to the palladic quality of the Stone.

¹ Quoted in William Jones' *Crowns and Coronations*.

By far and away the most telling incident in proof of the firmly rooted belief in the talismanic character of the Stone of Destiny is afforded by ceremonies that marked the installation of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector. On the death of King Charles every royal emblem on which the vandals of Westminster could lay their hands was destroyed. The diadems of Alfred and Edith, the Imperial Crown, the Sceptres and the Staff of St Edward were broken up and cast into the melting pot, the gems that enriched them were sold, and the ancient vestments were presumably burned. Even the trees that bordered the Royal Walk of Elms in St James' Park, and the groves in Greenwich Park were uprooted and cut up for kindling that no memory of the Martyr might remain.¹ The only object that was saved—apart, of course, from those which they did not find—was the Coronation Chair. And when the Brewer of Huntingdon was installed as Protector of the Realm, the Coronation Chair was removed from the Abbey and set up beneath a canopy of state in Westminster Hall; and therein Cromwell took his seat for the first time in his newly-acquired dignity.²

Whence the Stone of Destiny originally came we do not know. Brayley, in Neale's *Westminster Abbey*, observes that it bears a close resemblance to the dun stones brought from Dundee. Planché observes "that the substances composing it accord in the grains with the sienite of Pliny, the same as Pompey's (or more properly Diocletian's) Pillar at Alexandria, but the particles are smaller." Professor Ramsey, who was responsible for the *Geological Account of the Coronation Stone* in Dean Stanley's *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*,³ notes that it resembles in structure the stones that form the doorway of Dunstaffnage Castle, and that it could by no possibility have come from Tara or from Iona, it would seem unlikely that it came from Bethel, and Egypt is not known to furnish any strata similar to the red sandstone of the Coronation Stone.

Dean Stanley, being equally unwilling to accept either the Jacob legend or that proffered by archaeologists to the effect that the Stone was a pagan inauguration stone,

¹ Evelyn *Sylva*, vol. II, p. 253.

² John Prestwich *Republia*, 1787, p. 3.

³ Stanley *Historical Memorials*, edit. 1882 pp. 499-500.

advocated a third theory. He held that that was most probable which "identifies it with the stony pillow on which Columba rested, and on which his dying head was laid in his Abbey of Iona; and if so it belongs to the minister of the first authentic Western consecration of a Christian Prince—that of the Scottish chief Aidan."¹

¹ *Historical Memorials*, edit 1882, p 52

CHAPTER XI

ROODS AND BANNERS

"Hoc signo tuetur pius, hoc vincitur inimicus."

*Inscribed on the Cross of Victory of King Pelayo in
Orviedo Cathedral.*

THE belief, that the presence of a sacred banner, saintly relic or holy rood, would make certain the ultimate victory of the party that bore it, is one that can be traced back to very early times, and was formerly universal.

One of the most treasured objects possessed by the ancient rulers of Persia was the sacred *durufsh-Kawah*, the leathern apron of the mythical blacksmith Kawah. Jamshid, puffed up by pride, had been overthrown by the usurper Dahhak, parricide, tyrant and chosen instrument of the Devil, whom Firdausi, bitter with the memories of the Arab invasion, metamorphosed into one of the hated race. Dahhak, among his many unpleasing practices, was accustomed to feed the snakes which were his attributes upon human flesh, and after a thousand years, for so long did he reign, his people or what was left of them, rebelled under the leadership of Kawah and set up in the despot's place young Feridun, son of Abtin, "of the seed of Kayan." Kawah's apron was accordingly preserved as the talisman of the royal house of Kayan. It survived to historical times. It is stated to have been eighteen feet in length and twelve feet in breadth, and adorned with silk and gems ¹

Not only in the East did such beliefs prevail. Scandinavian mythology, which is replete with tales of charmed arms that brought victory to the wielder, affords us one or two outstanding examples.

¹ Jones *Crowns and Coronations*, p. 431

The Danes who descended upon the coasts of Northumberland in 866 under the leadership of Hingnar, Hubba and Ivar, sons of the celebrated Ragnar Lodbroke, bore with them the wondrous standard *Reafan*—the raven—

“Wrought by the sisters of the Danish king,
Of furious Iver in a midnight hour
While the sick moon, at their enchanted song
Wrapt in pale tempest, labour’d through the clouds,
The demons of destruction then, they say,
Were all abroad, and mixing with the woof
Their baleful power The sisters ever sang,
‘Shake, standard, shake this ruin on our foes.’”

(THOMSON AND MALLETT'S *Alfred*.)

Asser, in his *Life of Alfred*,¹ is more modest in the time he states that it took to weave and work this banner, and he enlarges the “midnight hour” to a whole day. But he counterbalances this unwilling concession to probability by saying that in every battle in which the Danes were destined to be victorious a crow with beating wings appeared within its folds; but when defeat awaited them, the banner as it advanced upon the enemy hung down lifeless from its pole. This talisman was finally taken from the Danes when the garrison of Kynwith Castle, upon the Taw in Devon, sallied out upon the besieging army of Hubba and left that sanguinary pirate dead upon the field.

A no less potent standard was that which Sigurd's mother gave to the hero. But it was reputed to be no unmixed blessing—or so we should now hold it—for whoever bore it on the day of battle was fated to be slain that day. In one of Sigurd's battles no less than three standard-bearers carried it in turn, nor was it until the third had been sent to join his predecessors in Valhalla that victory crowned Sigurd's arms.²

In many places where the Danes established themselves most firmly, traces of this belief are even yet to be found. Except, however, among the peasantry the superstition is cherished as a quaint survival, and all memory of the origin of the belief having been forgotten, the demi-gods

¹ Asser *Vit. Alfred*, 10

² Torfaeus, 27.

of ancient Scandinavia have been replaced in the course of time by the elf-maidens of mediaeval superstition.

The association of the Macleods of Skye with the inhabitants of Elfland has been intimate and, for the family in general, fortunate. Elsewhere in these pages I have written of the charmed cup of the Macleods of Raasay. The Macleods of Dunvegan are also the owners of a "luck" in the shape of a banner, said to be of fairy origin.

The green banner of Dunvegan is stated by Dr Norman Macleod, D D., to be a square of rich silk worked with crosses in gold thread and powdered apparently at hazard with 'elf-spots,' presumably 'elf-shots,' or small flint arrow-heads doubtless depicted as heraldic *pheons*.¹

The earliest account of this potent talisman known to me appears in Pennant's account of his second tour of the Islands.² He visited Dunvegan on July 18th, 1772. "Here is preserved," he wrote, "the Braolanch shi, or fairy-flag of the family, bestowed on it by Titania the Ben-shi, or wife to Oberon, king of the fairies. She blessed it at the same time with powers of the first importance, which were to be exerted on only three occasions; but, on the last, after the end was obtained, an invisible Being is to arrive and carry off standard and standard bearer, never more to be seen. A family of Clan y Fattter had this dangerous office, and held by it free land in Bracadale.

"The flag has been produced thrice. The first time in an unequal engagement against the Clan-Roland [*sic*], to whose sight the Macleods were multiplied ten-fold. The second preserved the heir of the family, being then produced to save the longing of the lady; and the third time, to save my own; but it was so tattered that Titania did not seem to think it worth sending for."

Pennant's visit to Dunvegan can scarcely have been regarded by the Macleods as a calamity. If inclined to regard these pleasing legends with scepticism, Pennant's attitude towards those who subscribed to them, or at least repeated them, was always one of sympathetic interest. The arrival, however, of the insufferable Lexicographer and the sycophantic Boswell in 1773 should have afforded

¹ Donald Macleod *Memoir of Norman Macleod, D D*, 1876, vol 1, Appendix p. 335

² John Pennant's *Tours*—Pinkerton edit, vol. iii, p. 321.

ample justification for the production of the fairy banner. But Highland hospitality forbade any such demonstration—or maybe no warning of Johnson's bitter tongue, no rumour of his reputation for biting the hand that fed him, had reached distant Skye.

Twice only according to family tradition has the banner been waved to summon help from Elfland. And the more generally accepted version of the legend relates that the fairy donor was not Titania herself but one of her subjects who became the mistress of the Macleod of Macleod.¹

The fairy banner was credited with one other beneficial quality. When the potato crop failed the peasantry were accustomed to ask that the banner should be displayed (though not unfurled), apparently in the belief that its mere appearance would produce a fine crop.² Certain tutelary powers were, moreover, believed to have passed from the banner to its owner, and when, after a long absence, the Lord of Dunvegan returned home, the natives believed, and still believe, that this happy event would result in an unusually plentiful catch of herrings.³

The later history of the Fairy Banner and an early tradition connected with it, unnoticed by Pennant and others, are recorded by Dr. Norman Macleod, D D (1783-1862), Dean of the Chapel Royal, in his autobiographical reminiscences.⁴ One of the many prophecies of Dun Kenneth, in Gaelic *Coimnich Odhar*, the most celebrated of all seventeenth century Highland seers, and one which Dr Macleod had often heard repeated years before its fulfilment, was to the effect that when "Norman, the third Norman [Macleod], the son of the hard-boned English lady" should perish by an accident; when the

¹ E B Simpson: *Folklore in Lowland Scotland*, p. 109. It was very generally believed that Merlin and even less distinguished warlocks were the offspring of unions between mortals and either incubi or succubi—the former being demons in male shape, the latter those who could assume the form of women. Even ancient and noble families did not disdain descent from such unholy alliances. Robert of Normandy—Robert the Devil—was so engendered. And Baldwin, Count of Flanders, who became Emperor of the East, is said to have married a demon whom he met in the Forest of Mormay.

² Alexander Smith writing about 1865 (*A Summer in Skye*, edit. Lauchlan Maclean Watt, p. 212) says that the Macleod was asked to wave it at the time of the potato famine but refused to do so.

³ Frazer: *The Golden Bough*,—*Magie*, I, p. 368.

⁴ Printed in Macleod's *Memoir*, vol. I Appendix, pp. 334-335.

"Maidens of Macleod"—certain well-known rocks so named off the coast of Skye—should become the property of a Campbell; when a fox should have her young ones in a turret of the Castle; and when the Fairy Banner should for the last (presumably the third) time be displayed—then would the glory of Macleod depart; a great part of the estates be sold; and, last, the family should so shrink that a small 'curragh' would carry all the gentlemen of the name of Macleod across Loch Dunvegan. Happily to the prophecy was appended the promise that in later and far distant times a second John Breac, a hero of the house, should arise, who should restore the estates to the family and raise its honour and power to a pitch never before enjoyed.

"And now," continues Dr. Macleod, "as to the curious coincidence of its fulfilment. There was, at that time, [towards the close of the year 1799] at Dunvegan, an English smith, with whom I became a favourite, and who told me, in solemn secrecy, that the iron chest which contained the 'fairy flag' was to be forced open next morning; that he had arranged with Mr. Hector Macdonald Buchanan to be there with his tools for that purpose

"I was most anxious to be present, and I asked permission to that effect of Mr. Buchanan. [Macleod's man of business], who granted me leave on condition that I should not inform any one of the name of Macleod that such was intended, and should keep it a profound secret from the chief. This I promised, and most faithfully acted on. Next morning we proceeded to the chamber in the East Turret, where was the iron chest that contained the famous flag, about which there is an interesting tradition.

"With great violence the smith tore open the lid of this iron chest; but in doing so a key was found, under part of the covering, which would have opened the chest, had it been found in time.

"There was an inner case in which was found the flag, enclosed in a wooden box of strongly scented wood. . . .

"On this occasion, the melancholy news of the death of the young and promising heir of Macleod, reached the Castle. 'Norman, the third Norman', was a lieutenant of H.M.S. the *Queen Charlotte*, which was blown up at sea,

and he and the rest perished.¹ At the same time the rocks called the 'Macleod's Maidens' were sold, in the course of that very week, to Angus Campbell of Ensay, and they are still in possession of his grandson

"A fox in possession of a Lieutenant Maclean, residing in the West Turret of the Castle, had young ones, which I handled, and thus all that was said in the prophecy alluded to was so far fulfilled, although I am glad the family of my chief still enjoy their ancestral possessions, and the worst part of the prophecy accordingly remains unverified.

"I merely state the facts of the case as they occurred, without expressing any opinion whatever as to the nature of these traditionary legends with which they were connected."

The story of the prophecy and its fulfilment as related by Dr. Macleod is excellent. It possesses only two disadvantages: the third Norman Macleod of Dunvegan, the son of John who died in 1767, was not the son of an English woman nor was he blown up in H.M.S. *Queen Charlotte*. He was born in 1754, his mother being Amelia, daughter of Brodie of Brodie, Lyon King at Arms, and he rose to the rank of General in the British Army. The Norman of the prophecy may, however, have been Norman, his son and heir born about 1785, who died young.² But he was not the son of an English woman, his mother being Mary Mackenzie of Suddie. His step-mother was, however, Sarah Stackhouse, daughter of N. Stackhouse, Second Member of the Council of Bombay. Such minor errors in the fulfilment of a prophecy of this description are, after all, no very great matters.

In the Middle Ages similar banners, but now the ensigns of the warriors of the early Church or the patron saints of individuals, or more often of the great religious houses, figured prominently in every expedition that partook in any degree of the character of a crusade. When William

¹ The *Queen Charlotte* was burned off Leghorn on March 17th, 1800. Her Captain and most of the crew perished, but Vice-Admiral Lord Keith was saved.

² The position in the pedigree of Macleod of the Norman of the prophecy is given correctly by Smith (*A Summer in Skye*, p. 205) as "son of the third Norman." But this accuracy may well be the result of discreet editing in the light of past events.

of Normandy sailed for England in 1066 to punish Harold Godwinson for his broken oath, sworn at Bayeux upon the box of relics known as the Bull's Eye, he brought with him a banner blessed by Pope Alexander II. and a ring containing a relic of St. Peter.¹ And his uterine brother and companion in arms, Robert, Count of Mortain—he who, while hunting in the woods of Bodmin on the day that William Rufus was shot in the New Forest, is said to have been vouchsafed a vision of the king's corpse, naked and bloody borne upon the back of a gigantic black goat—always had the banner of St. Michael carried before him in battle.²

Again in 1138 the Yorkshire levies, under the command of Walter Lespec, the founder of Rievaulx Abbey, met and defeated the host of David of Scotland at Cowmoor, near Northallerton. The palladium of the English forces that day was a great car in which stood masts bearing the sacred banners of St. Peter, St. Wilfrid and St. John of Beverley.

The Dannebrog, the red banner charged with a white cross, that in the Middle Ages was believed to bring victory to the Danish arms wherever it appeared, is reported to have fallen from the sky during a battle between King Valdemar the Victorious and the heathen Livonians in 1219 on the site of the present town of Wolmar. Valdemar's own banner having been captured by the enemy the loss was promptly made good from some Heavenly arsenal, and the presence of this miraculous flag, combined with the prayers of Andrew, the old Archbishop of Lund, who stood like Moses and St. Columba with his hands above his head all day, resulted in a victory for the Christians and a most satisfactory slaughter of the unbelievers.

To eradicate heathen beliefs from peoples often but newly converted to Christianity was manifestly impossible. The Church herself, moreover, encouraged the belief in the efficacy of symbols and relics. And it is therefore

¹ *Monumenta Gregoriana*, p. 414.

² Robert Hunt *Folklore of the West of England*, pp. 272–273, *Ordericus Vitalis* (edit. Le Prévost, II, 194–223), is responsible for the legend of Count Robert's vision. As Robert apparently died in 1091, the vision may be supposed to have been seen by his son, William, who was not deprived of his father's vast possessions until after Tinchebray.

no matter for surprise to find ideas essentially pagan transferred to Christian emblems. There is indeed scarcely a country in Europe that does not, or has not at some time, cherished a holy cross or rood which is believed to have brought victory in its train, at first against the heathen, and later, with the passage of years, against every invader or private enemy.

Eusebius, the chronicler Bishop of Caesarea, a contemporary of the Emperor Constantine, makes mention under the year 325 of a lance, the head of which was fashioned "in similitudinem crucis", that the Emperor was wont to carry in battle, convinced that wherever this sacred symbol appeared victory would follow. And the ancient legend, that this same Emperor in one of his wars, upon the eve of battle saw in the heavens either the sign of the Cross or the monogram of the Holy Name in gold upon the purple of the evening sky, and thereafter adopted this celestial heraldry for his own arms, is too familiar to repeat. But be the story true or false, the potency of the monogram of the name of our Lord was held so great that it was transferred from the purple gold-fringed banner of the Emperor to the armour of his guards, whose great oval shields, if we may accept the evidence of the mosaics at Ravenna, were set with the XP of the Holy Name in great square crystals of red and blue and green.

After the death of Don Roderic at Xeres de la Frontera and the overthrow of the Visigothic Kingdom of Spain, a small Christian remnant of this once great people took refuge in the mountains of Asturias. Thence at first under King Pelayo and then under his brother Favila (of whom nothing seems to be known beyond the circumstance that after a short two year's reign he was killed by a bear), and lastly under Alphonso I. the Catholic, they waged unceasing war against the infidel. Pelayo, who reigned from 718 to 737, was always accompanied in battle by a wooden cross, which later became known as the Cross of Victory, since it was credited with bringing victory wherever it went. It is now in the Camara Santa of Oviedo Cathedral where it was placed by Alphonso III. the Great, and his Queen Jimena. The ancient wooden cross is no longer visible, for it forms the *alma* to a rich casing of gold and filigree and gems, a yard in length by two feet four and a

half in width. This rich casing, so says an inscription upon it, was made in the Castle of Gauzon in Asturias in the year 828.

Probably the most justly celebrated of all Rood palladia was the famous Black Rood of Scotland, once in the Abbey of Holyrood and later one of the most precious trophies possessed by the Cathedral of Durham. And I am the more inclined at this juncture to devote some space to it and its history, because though it has met here and there with some notice—in every guide to Holyrood and in the *Rites of Durham* for example—its history has never so far as I know been fully chronicled in a readily accessible form.

The legendary origin of this cross is recorded in the *Rites of Durham*,¹ though it is therein associated with the name of David II. instead of that of David I. I have, however, adopted this version of the story in preference to that given in Bellenden's translation of Bocce, as the latter is couched in language almost too archaic to be read or understood without the aid of a glossary.

"which crosse by most auneyent & credible writers is recorded to haue comed to the said king most myraculouſlie, & to haue hapned & chaunced in to his hand being a hunting at the wylde harte in a forrest nygh Eddenbrowghe vpon Holy Rude daie, commonlie called the exaltacion of the crosse, the said kinge ſeuered & parted from his nobles & company, suddenly there appered vnto him (as it ſeemed) a moſt faire harte runninge towardes him in full & ſpedy courſe, which ſo affraid the kinges horſe, that he violently courſed away, whome the harte ſo firceſly and ſwiftlye followed, that he baire forcible both the king and his horſe to ground who ſo being diſmayd dyd caſt backe his handes betwixt the Tyndes of the ſaid harte to ſtay himſelfe, and then and there moſt ſtranglye ſlypped into the kinges handes the ſaid crosse moſt wonderouſly, at the veiwē Wherof immediatlye the hart vaniſhed away, and neuer after was ſeene no man knowing certainly what mettell or wood the ſaid crosse was mayd of. In the place wherein this miracle was ſo wroughte, doth

¹ *Rites of Durham*, pp. 24 and 25

now spring a fountaine called the Rude well.¹ And the next night after the said crosse so bechanced vnto hym, the said king was charged & warned in his sleepe by a vision to buyld an abbey in the same place which he most deligentlie observing, as a true message from god almightie, did send for workemen into france & flanders, who at there cummyng weare reteyned, & dyd buyld & erect the said abbey accordingle, which the king caused to be furnished with Chanons Regular & dedicated the same in the honor of the crosse, and placed the said crosse moste sumptuouslie & richly in the said abbey, ther to remayne as a most renowned monument & so there remayned"

As is usual this legend is of a comparatively late date. Hector Boece, who died in 1536, a confirmed and not too critical collector of tales and traditions, makes no mention of it. It does, however, make an appearance as an interpolation in Bellenden's translation of Boece's chronicle² produced about the time of the latter's death. And it had been current in the early years of the fifteenth century, if not somewhat earlier, for the seal of Holyrood of the time of James I of Scotland (1406-1437) bears a stag's head erased with a cross between the antlers. Bellenden, if he did not take the story from hearsay, probably culled it from the *Holyrood Calendar*,³ of a date not earlier than the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

The true history of the Black Rood of Scotland is, however, none the less interesting. Margaret, sister of Edgar Aethling, and niece to Edward the Confessor, married Malcolm III Canmore, King of Scots in 1067, and among the precious objects brought by this devout lady, later to be canonized St. Margaret of Scotland, in her dower was a cross "quam nigram vocant", which Ælfred of Rievaulx describes⁴ thus,—

"Est autem crux illa, longitudinem habens palmae, de auro purissimo, opere mirabili fabricata, quae in modum techae clauditur et aperitur Cernitur in ea quaedam Dominicae crucis portio, sicut saepe multorum argumento

¹ At the foot of Salisbury Crags, about a quarter of a mile south-east of Holyrood Palace, once called "St David's" and now "St Margaret's Well" See *Proc Soc Antiq Scot* vol II, p 143 and vol III, p 365

² Bk XII, cp 16

Bannatyne Club—*Miscellany*, vol 1

⁴ Fordun *Scotichronicon*, lib V, cap IV, Twisden *Scriptores Decem*, col 349

miraculorum probatum est, Salvatoris nostri imaginem habens de ebore decentissime sculptam, et aureis distinctionibus mirabiliter decoratam." On her death on November 16th, 1093, "hanc religiosa regina Margareta . . . quasi munus haereditarium transmisit ad filios. Hanc igitur crucem, omni Scotorum genti non minus terribilem, quam amabilem, cum rex devotissime adorasset, cum multis lacrymis, peccatorum confessione praemissa, exitum suum coelestium mysteriorum perceptione munivit." In turn it passed to her three sons, all Kings of Scots, Edgar, Alexander and David, and it was David who, having become king in 1124, founded the Abbey of Holyrood in 1128, and gave this cross into the keeping of its monks.¹ As its subsequent history would shew however, the Kings of Scots would seem to have retained a personal interest in it, and its position would appear to have been analogous to that of any other item of the Regalia.

How it obtained its title of the Black Cross is not clear. Canon Fowler suggests that a portion of the True Cross was enclosed within a black cross, and that in turn in a gold case, which again may have been on occasions enclosed within the Great Black Rood.² The only history of Holyrood published suggests that the figure of the Crucified Christ was of ebony;³ but Ælfred's words are quite clear—it was of ivory. The latter part of Canon Fowler's suggestion is unquestionably correct. The practice was a usual one in the Middle Ages and Durham itself furnishes in the figure of Our Lady of Bolton a good example.⁴

It was not long before the Black Rood achieved a reputation as a palladium. In the Life of Queen Margaret⁵ we read "Ipsa quoque illam, quam Nigram Crucem nominare, quamque in maxima semper veneratione habere consuevit, sibi afferi praecepit," etc., but in the Brit. Mus. MS. *Tiberius E.* 1⁶ it is referred to as the "Crucem Scotiae nigram"

How often this Cross led the Scottish forces to victory in the first three centuries of its existence we do not know

¹ Holingshead *History of Scotland*, p. 177.

² *Rites of Durham*, p. 216

³ *Guide to Holyrood*

⁴ See *Rites of Durham*

⁵ Surtees Symeon, p. 252, Pinkerton *Scottish Saints*

⁶ Fol. 186a.

But when in August 23rd, 1291, the Scottish regalia and all the other emblems of that country's independence were surrendered to Edward I., the Black Cross was taken from the Royal Treasury in Edinburgh Castle, where it had been placed, doubtless for security, and was carried off to Berwick.¹

In 1328 this precious object was, pursuant to the terms of the treaty of Northampton, returned to Scotland. Nor was it long before David II. the son of the redoubtable Bruce, made up his mind to test its powers. In 1346 Edward III. was in France endeavouring by the sharpness of his sword to convince unwilling Frenchmen that he was their rightful king. The King of Scots, as an ally of France, therefore mustered his forces—some two thousand men-at-arms and thirteen thousand lighter armed troops—at Perth. Full of high hopes and spurred on by the expectation of rich plunder, they crossed the Tyne above Newcastle and made their way by Hexham into the Palatine Bishopric of Durham. And to make assurance of the outcome of this raid doubly sure David brought with him from the Abbey of Holyrood the Black Rood—or rather Roods—of Scotland, the Cross of St. Margaret and the great Rood in which, if Canon Fowler's conjecture is correct—as it has all the air of being—the former was generally kept.

Of the great Black Rood we possess no contemporary description. Both it and St. Margaret's Cross are briefly described in 1383 as "*una crux nigra que vocatur Blak rode of Scotland*," and "*una crux que vocatur Sancte Margarete regine Scocie*"² But from the more detailed descriptions of the other crosses that appear in the same inventory we may assume that the great Rood was not at that time of so elaborate a fashion as it later achieved. In the sixteenth century we know that it consisted of the figure of the Saviour on the Cross with "the picture of our Lady on the one side of our Saviour and the picture of St. John on the other side, the which Rood and pictures were all three very richly wrought in silver, the which

¹ *The Acts of Parliament of Scotland*, vol. 1, p. 112—Record Commission—"unum scrinium argenteum deauratum in quo reperta crux qui vocatur la blak Rode"

² *Extracts from the Account Rolls of Durham*, p. 426—Surtees Soc

were all smoked black over, being large pictures of a Yard and five [*sic*] quarters long, and on every one of their heads, a Croune of pure bett gold of goldsmiths work with a devise or wrest to take them off or on."¹ One is tempted to suspect that the figures of Our Lady and St. John were fifteenth century additions to the original Rood after it passed into the possession of the Abbey of Durham.

News of the approach of David's power reached the Archbishop of York, and he and the northern lords, those of them who were not serving in France, mustered their forces and marched out against the invader. But the night before the battle John Fossour or Forcer, Prior of Durham from 1341 to 1374, had a vision "commanding him to take the holie corporax cloth, which was within the corporax wherewith St Cuthbert did cover the chalice when he vsed to say masse, and to put the same holie Relique like vnto a banner clothe vpon a speare point, & on the morrowe after to goe & repaire to a place on the west parte of the cite of Durham called the Readhilles And there to remayne & abyde till the end of the said battell, to which vision the prior obeyinge, & talking the same for a Revelacion of gods grace & mercy by the medycion of holie St. Cuthbert did accordingly early in the next morninge together with the Mounkes of the said abbay, repaire to the said place called the Readhilles there most devoutly humbling & prostrating them selves in praier for the victorie in the said battell, a great multitude and number of Scottes Running & pressinge by them both one waie and other, with intention to haue spoiled them, but yett they had no power or suffrance to commytt any violence & force vnto such holie persons so occupied in praiers, being protected & defended by the mightie providence of almightie god, and by the mediacion of holy St Cuthbert & the presence of the said holie Relique"²

King David, following the example of other good knights before him, and anxious to be doubly armed for the approaching battle, removed the Cross of St Margaret from the great Black Rood and bore it upon his own person

¹ *Rites of Durham*, p. 19—see also p. 25

² *Rites of Durham*, pp. 23 and 24

suspended we may believe about his neck upon a chain.¹ —“the said King cummyng towards the said battell, dyd bring yt vpon him as a most myraculous & fortunate relique, Notwithstandinge that the said kinge the saide nighte before he addresses him forwarde to the said battell, was in a dream admonished, that in any wise he should not attempt to spoile or violate the churche goods of St Cuthbert or any thinge that apperteyned vnto that holie Saint, which for that he moste contemptuously and presumptuously dyd disdayne & contemne, violating and distroyinge so much as he could the said goodes and lands belonging to St. Cuthbert was not onely punished by god almighty, by his owne captivitie being taken at the said battell in the feild and therin very sore wounded.”²

The two armies met at Beaurepaire near Neville's Cross on October 17th, 1346, and there the Scots' faith in their palladia was shattered. Not only were the King and the two Black Roods of Scotland taken, but the King's brother and numerous lords and gentlemen were slain. David was first taken to Ogle Castle to recover from his wounds, and later, when the Queen had bought him from John Copland, who had taken him, he was removed to London. The two Crosses were brought to Durham, and set up at the east end of the south aisle of the Choir of the Cathedral, while the King's banner and those of many other lords and knights were hung up for monuments about the fane, where they remained until the Suppression, when their shreds were doubtless destroyed with those other trophies from Flodden.

The corporas cloth of St Cuthbert, that had proved—with the aid of the English cloth-yard shafts—so much more potent a talisman than the two Black Roods of Scotland, was shortly afterwards embodied by Prior Fossour in a banner—“of intent & purpose that the same should be alwaies after presented & carried to any battell as occasion should serve, and which was [never] caryed or shewed at any battell, but by the especiall grace of god

¹ The *Cid Campeador* is said to have always worn in battle the miniature copper and enamel Crucifix now preserved in Salamanca Cathedral. Unhappily for the tradition this talismanic “relic” is, like others of its type and enrichment, characteristic *Lamoges* work of the thirteenth century.

² *Rites of Durham*, p. 25

almightie, & the mediacion of holie St. Cuthbert it browghte home the victorie."¹

This celebrated Banner of St. Cuthbert was fashioned of crimson velvet a yard wide and five yards long, richly embroidered all over with flowers in gold and green silk thread and ending in five tongues. At the top just beneath the silver cross-bar, from which it was suspended, was a square of white velvet half a yard across, ensigned with a red cross, and under this was placed the chalice veil of St. Cuthbert.² Whether it appeared at all during the troubles of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we do not know. But at Durham and "at manye other places besydes, yt was thought to be one of the goodlyest Reliquies that was in England, and yt was not borne but of principall daies when ther was a generall prosession, as easter daie, the Assention day, Whitsonday, Corpus christi daie, & Sancte Cuthbert day. And at other festivall daies it was sett vp at the east end of the shrine because yt was so chargeable [or in modern parlance weighty]."³ But it certainly figured prominently at Flodden Field and proved its potency on that occasion so fatal to the Scottish peerage.

The end of St. Cuthbert's Banner is sad to relate. Among the many virtues attributed to this ancient relic was the power to stay a conflagration by its mere presence; more—it was believed to be like the salamander impervious to the effects of fire.⁴ Among the many "lewde disposed persouns, who dispised the antiquetie and worthynes of monumentes after the suppression of Abbeyes" was the wife of William Whittingham, whom Elizabeth made Dean of Durham in 1563. In 1530 Whittingham had gone to Orleans, where he married Katherine, a sister of John Calvin. This wretched woman, besotted with the obnoxious teachings of her brother and of John Knox, "did most inuriously burne & consume the same [banner] in hir fire in the notable contempt & disgrace of auntyent &

¹ *Rites of Durham*, p. 26. Provost Consitt (*Life of St. Cuthbert*, p. 215) notes that the Banner was borne for the last time in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1556, when it certainly failed to "bring home the victory." It was, moreover, seriously damaged by the rioters in 1536-1537 (*Rites of Durham*, p. 216, and the *Feretrars Roll of 1537-38—Account Rolls of Durham Abbey*, p. 483).

² *Rites of Durham*, p. 26, *Laber Cart S. Crucis*, preface p. xxvii.

³ *Rites of Durham*, pp. 95 and 96.

⁴ *Reginsildus Dunelmensis*, cap. 39.

goodly Reliques.”¹ She was doubtless possessed of the same spirit as the man who on being shewn a lamp in one of the ancient churches of Rome, which he was assured had burned steadily for a thousand years, promptly blew it out with the remark “Waal, I guess it’s out now.”

The loss of the two Black Roods in 1291 would not seem seriously to have affected the spirits or the fighting qualities of the Scots, who were, moreover, possessed of other talismans but little less potent. At Arbroath was kept the Brechbannoch, or chasse of St. Columba, later known as the Monymusk Reliquary which recently achieved some notoriety through the ill-advised attempt of its owner to dispose of it at auction. At the Priory of Strathfillan were five precious mementoes of St. Fillan, his *quigrich* or crozier, his *bernane*, or bell, his *meser*, or copy of the gospels, his *ferg*, a word that has so far I believe defied interpretation, and his *mayne*, or hand. Of these the most potent was the *mayne*, the miraculous left hand of the Saint which he was wont to use as an illuminant when writing at night. He had merely to lift it for it to become incandescent, as his servant, who saw the miracle performed when spying upon his master through the keyhole of his cell’s door, bore witness.

Three of these relics were taken by the army of Bruce to Bannockburn—the Brechbannoch of St. Columba and the cases of the Quigrich and of the hand of St. Fillan. And the night before the battle, the night of Saturday, June 22nd, this last, according to Boece, performed a miracle.

[ll 49,964—49,994]

“As gude king Robert in that samun nicht
 Befoir the feild, at his deuotioun
 Walkit that nicht, into his orisoun
 To Sanct Phelen most speciaill of the laif,
 Becaus the Scottis [men] was wont to haif
 His richt arme bane into ane siluer cace,
 Quhareur tha passit into ony place,
 Agane thair fais for to fecht in feild,
 And, as my author did to me reveild,
 That siluer cace into the nicht throw hap,
 Was hard rict loud thair closand with ane clap,
 Ane agit priest, the clap quhen he did heir,
 Keipit the cace, richt suddantlie drew neir,

¹ *Rites of Durham*, p. 27.

And fand the arme he had forth at hame,
 Quhilk he that tyme durst nocht reveill for blame,
 Weill cloisit thair into the siluer cace.
 On to the king he ran than in ane race,
 And told him all the maner was and how,
 Ilk word be word, as I haif said to yow;
 How he that tyme throw aduenture and hap
 The silver cace hard closand with ane clap,
 And in the caice the relic syne did get,
 Quhilk he at hame behind him had foryet.
 Gude king Robert quhen he hard how he said,
 And all the laif rycht blyth tha war and glaid,
 Traistand richt weill that all thing suld ga rycht,
 Sen gratus God, of his gudnes and mycht,
 Hed sic ane signe of victorie thame schawin,
 Greit traist tha had that all suld be thair awin,
 Quhilk causit thame thon be the leist ane knaif,
 In that querrell moir curage for to haif"¹

It is conceivable that the supreme confidence which fired the Bruce's followers the following day was as much inspired by the sight of the Brechannoch of Monymusk in their midst (strapped upon the broad breast of Bernard, Abbot of Arbroath, its custodier), and the other charms, as by the knowledge that bog-land and pitfalls rendered their position almost impregnable. The result of the battle must at all events have materially increased the reputation of these relics as talismans of great power.

Whether the Hand of St Fillan was indeed forgotten in the hurry of departure from Strathfillan as its monkish custodier asserted, or whether it was deliberately removed from the case for fear of its loss during the forthcoming battle, we shall never know; but tradition asserts that it was dread of such a catastrophe that led the Prior of Strathfillan to abstract the Quigrich from its gilded case and to bring the shell only to the meeting of the royal host. Knowledge of this deception, indicative as it was of a most improper lack of faith in the relic's powers, was brought to Bruce's ears, and shortly after the battle the four mementoes of St Fillan were removed from the care of the Priory and entrusted to lay custodiers in

¹ Hector Boece *The Buke of the Chronicles of Scotland*, edit W. B. Turnbull, 1858, vol. iii, pp. 227-228—Chronicles and Memorials

Glendochart.¹ And the memory of this guardianship is even to-day perpetuated in the locality by the names of various crofts held by the Doires, or Dewars, the hereditary keepers, in right of their offices.²

It is, moreover, probable that the Abbot of Arbroath was likewise guilty of the same lack of faith, for within a year of Bannockburn the Breccbannoch was out of his keeping and entrusted by charter to Malcolm of Monymusk, together with the lands of Forglen, upon the condition that he and his heirs should take the place of the Abbot in bearing this reliquary in the King's army so often as there was need.

All of which goes to prove that whatever doubts the clerical keepers of these relics may have entertained as to their efficacy as palladia, the popular faith in them encouraged by the Crown was an abiding one.

The Prior of Strathfillan did not, however, surrender his rights over these relics without a struggle, we may believe, and even so late as 1550 his successor made an unsuccessful attempt to get three of the relics back into his hands, or into churches within his jurisdiction. On February 14th, 1549/50, Sir Hugh Currie, Prior of Strathfillan, endeavoured to force the keepers of the *quisgrich*, the *ferg* and the *bernane* to replace these objects in the churches of Killin and Strathfillan, whence he insisted they were not to be removed without his leave. The Lords of the Council, however, decided that the titles of the custodiers were well established and dismissed the reverend gentleman's appeal.

The subsequent adventures of two of these relics, which have now happily found a permanent resting place in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, are well worth recording.

Some remains of the ruined Chapel of Killin on the banks of Loch Tay are still standing and the Holy Pool of Strathfillan—

“—Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel
And the craz'd brain restore.”—

(*Marmion*, Canto I, xxix.)

¹ See Wilson *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, vol. II

² *Stat. Account*, xvii, p. 377

was visited by believers in its powers, not alone followers of the Church of Rome, as late as the middle of last century. The Bell of St. Fillan would seem to have retained its talismanic character until a late date, for we find it carried in some state at the coronation of King James IV. at Scone in 1488. Still later, like many other relics of this type, its talismanic character deteriorated until it became a detector of stolen cattle.¹ At the same time it developed an amuletic character. Its miraculous powers as a healer of insanity were still believed in until close upon the end of the eighteenth century. Its marvellous properties and its appearance—it had by then been denuded of its rich case—are described in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*,² where it is said to be "of some mixed metal [actually bronze] about a foot high, and of an oblong form. It usually lay on a gravestone in the churchyard. When mad people were brought to be dipped in the saints' pool, it was necessary to perform certain ceremonies, in which there was a mixture of Druidism and Popery. After remaining all night in the chapel bound with ropes, the bell was set upon their head with great solemnity."³ It was a popular opinion that, if stolen, it would extricate itself out of the thief's hands, and return home ringing all the way." It was later locked up to prevent its superstitious use. Unfortunately this care of it did not save it from being stolen by an English tourist on either August 8th or 9th, 1798. This thieving vandal is generally described as an antiquary; actually he was of the same pestilential race as Katherine Whittingham, and he did what he did, not because he feared that the Bell might be lost or pass into unappreciative hands and be destroyed for old metal—which would have been a condonable action—but because he disapproved of superstitious beliefs.

At his house in Hertfordshire it remained until 1869. In that year the thief's descendant visited Lord Crawford, his cousin, at Tyndrum, and there told him of the Bell's survival. Whereupon Lord Crawford negotiated for its return to Scotland, and later in the year it was deposited,

¹ *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol. II, p. 14.

² *Stat Account*, xvii, p. 377.

³ The days held to be most propitious for these experiments were May 1st and August 1st (See *Proc Soc Antiq. Scot*, vol. IV, p. 269).

with the consent of the Heritors and Kirk Session of St Fillans, by Lord Crawford and the Bishop of Brechin in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland ¹

The later history of the Quigrich is even more interesting. From the day that Bruce committed its care to the charge of the Doires of Glendochart it remained in the undisputed possession of this family until the attempt to dispossess them of it in 1550. Its care was confirmed to them in the person of Malice Doire by James III in 1487—"we have understand that oure servitour Malice Doire and his forebears has had ane rehick of Saint Filane, callit the Quigrich, in keping of ws and of our progenitouris of maist nobill mynde, quhem God assoylie, sen the tyme of King Robert the Bruys and of before, and made nane obedience nor answer to na person, spirituale nor temporale, in ony thing concerning the said haly rehick" ²

At some time, however, during the eighteenth century they were apparently induced to part with it to an ancestor of the mother of the Rev. Æneas M'Donell Dawson. But almost immediately after the completion of the transaction the Doires ceased to prosper, and attributing their change of circumstance to their indifference to a sacred object that had been most solemnly entrusted to them, they persuaded the person who had inherited the crozier from the purchaser to resell the relic to them ³

It next appeared in 1782. In that year an English tourist was exploring the Highlands of Perthshire, and in the course of his rambles came to the village of Killin, where he was shewn the Quigrich. He made a sketch of it and three years later communicated his discovery to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland ⁴

In 1818 the then custodier emigrated to Canada and became a farmer, and it was apparently from his son, Alexander Dewar of Plympton, that Dr. (afterwards Sir Daniel) Wilson endeavoured to purchase the relic in 1859 for the Antiquaries Museum in Edinburgh. The negotiations broke down owing to the high price asked—Lord Elgin had already offered £300 for it, but Dewar demanded

¹ *Proc Soc Antiq. Scot*, vol viii, pp 265 et seq.

² *Archæologia Scotica*, vol iii, p. 289

³ Daniel Wilson *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, vol ii, p 476

⁴ *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. iii, p 289

the equivalent of £400 sterling—and it was not until December 30th, 1876, that the purchase was effected. Alexander Dewar and his son Archibald generously accepted seven hundred dollars for the Quigrich, of which sum two hundred dollars was to be regarded as a gift from themselves.¹

¹ *Proc Soc Anthq Scot*, vol. xii, pp. 132-133.

CHAPTER XII

DRUMS AND TRUMPETS

"And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him "

Joshua, vi. 5

THE potency of, if not all, at least some forms of music to drive away demons, and to strike terror into the heart of a mortal enemy, is as old as the world and universal in its acceptance. Science may have a rational explanation for the phenomenon afforded by the collapse of the walls of a strong city at the sound of the trumpets of Israel. But the belief that such a thing could happen affords us a striking example of a superstition which has from time to time led to the creation of both family talismans and national palladia.

In the autumn of 1424 the long-standing quarrel between the power of Orthodoxy as represented by the Emperor Sigismund, and the armed might of Heresy in the person of Jean Zizka, appeared to be on the point of being permanently healed. Temporarily at least the Reforming party presented an united front to its opponents. The treaty of peace between the supporters of Orthodoxy and the heretic followers of Huss had been duly signed. And Zizka had himself been appointed Governor of Bohemia. But he was fated never to savour the fruits of his victory. Moravia was still held by Sigismund's son-in-law, Albrecht of Austria. And on the march to the frontier Zizka was compelled to halt in order to reduce

the castle of Przbislaw, which stood in a district then being ravaged by the plague. The malady struck him down. Rapidly he sank, and on October 11th he passed away.

Zizka's death must have been a calamity for his faction. His reputation among his foes was little short of diabolic, and his friends were not slow to encourage this belief. Believing himself an instrument of divine vengeance, he had sent monks and priests to the stake with the indifference, the enthusiasm even, of a Grand Inquisitor, mocking their screams, which he said were the bridal song of his sister. And no living soldier, one, moreover, with but half his sight and at the end completely blind could, when pitted against the tried chivalry of Europe, have done what he had done without infernal aid. He had fought and emerged victorious from thirteen pitched battles, and in more than one hundred lesser engagements and sieges. And when, as an ally of Wenceslaus II of Poland, he had met the Teutonic Knights at Tannenberg, he had left forty thousand soldiers of the Cross dead upon the field.

A nearly contemporary legend, however, asserts that the hero did his best to remedy the disaster of his death. When asked how and where he wished to be buried, he replied, "What does it matter? Let my flesh be given to the wild beasts and to the vultures and the eagles. But let my skin be cured and made into a drum. Let it be carried in the forefront of the battle, and the very sound of it shall scatter your enemies. For where I go victory shall follow." As Zizka ordered so it was done, and in many a subsequent battle the One-eyed One, dead yet living, led his followers on to conquest.

Doubt has frequently been cast upon the story. Maybe it savours too much of barbarism. It smacks rather of the savagery of the followers of Mohammed than of the meekness of the disciples of the Nazarene. But his contemporaries seem to have had no doubt of his relentless temper and the lengths to which it might lead him. The mutilation of his corpse would seem, however, to have been entirely unnecessary. Zizka's name was for long after one to conjure with; it was a most potent spell to put fear into the heart of the stoutest enemy of Heresy. When, in 1554, Ferdinand, brother of Charles V. and later Emperor, went to Czaslav and saw in the great church there the hero's tomb and his

iron mace that hung above it, he was moved to ask whose they were. When told he cried out—"Phui, phui, mala bestia, quae mortua etiam post centum annos terret vivos!"—"Foh! Foh! the wicked beast! Dead a hundred years and he still terrifies the living!" And incontinently fled not only from the church but from the town.

True or false, it is either way a fine picturesque conception and in entire harmony with the spirit of the age and country that gave it birth.¹

A very similar belief attaches to Drake's Drum, one of the most precious possessions of the Eliott-Drakes, of Buckland Abbey, near Plymouth, who trace their descent from the great mariner's brother, Thomas Drake. But to track the story to its source, to produce documentary evidence in support of its antiquity, is impossible, for it has only appeared in print of recent years.

Robert Hunt, in his *Popular Romances of the West of England*, provides us with what is probably the traditional and original version of the legend, before it had been beautified out of all recognition in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. "Even now," he writes, "as old Betty Donithorne, formerly the housekeeper at Buckland Abbey, told me—if the warrior hears the drum, which hangs in the hall of the abbey, and which accompanied him round the world, he rises and has a revel." The belief that old Sir Francis comes back to booze sack at the bidding of his ancient drum is not a particularly spirit-stirring belief; but then in Devonshire the old sea dog enjoys a reputation that is not all that one would have it. According to local legends he dabbled in the Black Art and possessed a familiar demon even if he had not, as was generally suspected, sold his soul to the Devil. It is even said of him that when the Armada hove in sight he was not playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe, but standing upon the Devil's Point, a headland that juts out into Plymouth Sound, casting chips of wood into the flood which by the aid of his Master or of his attendant sprite were straightway turned into ships of war.

It is unthinkable that Hunt, than whom none knew the West Country, its people and its superstitions better, having heard a finer tale would not have told it. And old Betty's legend has the authentic ring about it. It bears to my mind

¹ Is Krantzius responsible for this story?

the hall-marks of the seventeenth century; it is one that Joseph Glanvil would have loved—had he known it—to make a pendant to the story of the Drummer of Tedworth, that he tells with such gusto and such a wealth of circumstantial detail in his *Sadducismus Triumphatus*. The Drummer of Tedworth was no ghostly visitant bearing a message of death or disaster like the Drummer of Cortachy Castle. He was seemingly the familiar spirit of a wandering rogue who made a precarious livelihood by working spells for the credulous and playing at the country fairs. Mr. Mompesson, a local magistrate, had been much annoyed by this fellow's drumming and in March 1661 he clapped him into Gloucester gaol, to stand his trial for witchcraft. He was subsequently sentenced to transportation. But even when in durance his drumming went on, for his demon played upon the drum which the worthy magistrate had confiscated. Nor was the attempt to transport him successful, for so potent a wizard was he that "by raising storms and affrighting the seamen" he got them to put back and set him ashore, when once more the drumming began.

"And still the lightning plough'd the ground,
The thunder roar'd—and there would come
Amidst its loudest bursts a sound
Familiar once—it was—A DRUM "

Corbett, however, in his *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, refers to the more romantic legend. Sir Henry Newbolt has immortalized it in his song *Drake's Drum*. But Lady Elliott-Drake says nothing of it, she only underlines a picture of the Drum with the pertinent passage from Corbett.

Drake set sail upon what was destined to be his last expedition against the Spaniards in the late summer of 1595. The venture came to nothing. Philip of Spain had been caught napping too often, and when Drake appeared off Nombre de Dios, the treasure that he had come to filch had been removed to a place of safety. Disappointed, he sought elsewhere for what might pay the costs of his fleet. Again he was unfortunate. And meanwhile the rigours of the climate were ruining the health of his men. Spaniards they could cope with; disease they could not. Officers and men fell beneath its attack.

On November 12th, 1595, Sir John Hawkins succumbed. And on January 15th, 1596, Drake himself was taken sick of dysentery and confined to his cabin. Slowly but steadily he sank and on the 27th he realized that his end was very near. After dictating and signing his will he summoned his officers and distributed parting gifts to those who were not remembered in his last dispositions. He then called upon William Whitlocke to "put his armour upon him . . . which he would have done that he might dy as like a souldier."¹ On the following morning, January 28th, 1596, he died.

Early the following morning after being placed in a leaden coffin the Admiral's body was taken a league to sea and committed to the deep, to the crying of trumpets, the roll of drums and the roar of cannon.

Legend has it that previous to his death Drake gave orders that his drum, the drum that had circumnavigated the globe with him on board the *Pelican* in 1577-1580, should be taken home to England, that it should be preserved at Buckland Abbey—Buckland Monachorum, near Plymouth—and that when England's need should be direst it should be beaten, and he would return to help her.

"Take my Drum to England—Hang it by the shore,
Strike it when your powder's runnin' low,
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the Port o' Heaven,
And drum 'em up the Channel as we drumm'd 'em
long ago"

Twice—maybe thrice—his Drum has called Drake back from his watery grave or from the particular Valhalla reserved for the Paladins of the sea. Once he came back as Blake and played the whip to Van Tromp's broom. A second time he returned as the one-eyed, one-armed hero of Copenhagen and Trafalgar. But rumour has it that for a third time in 1914 Drake's Drum was heard in the Channel, rolling and beating from the white cliffs of Dover to the surf-engirdled Scillies calling for Drake to come again. And those that know saw in Jellicoe the modern spirit of Elizabeth's great Admiral.

These flights of fancy are pleasant to play with. Every

¹ Whitlocke *Liber Famulus*.

people cherishes a belief in some national hero, who shall come again in the hour of their direst need, be it Arthur from the Isle of Avalon, Thomas the Rhymer from his faery home beneath the Eildon Hills, Frederick of the Red Beard from the dark cavern above the Komgsee, Holger the Dane from the dungeons of the Kronborg, or Boabdil from the bowels of the hills of Granada. And there one would be pleased to leave the matter. But Corbett has stated that it was his belief that Drake's Drum was that "on which it is probable his last salute was beaten as he was committed to the sea"¹ Maybe it was. Drake's Drum is at least of the period of the great Admiral. It bears his arms and crest. It was Drake's drum. Let us at least believe the ancient legend, for it is one of the few which is associated with an object of the period to which it belongs.²

A talisman of an entirely different character, though a musical instrument, is the Feadan Dubh or Black Chanter of the MacPhersons of Cluny, on the safety of which the prosperity of the Clan Chattan depends. This is still carefully preserved at Cluny Castle, and of its supposed marvellous origin the following legend is related.

In 1396 the greater part of the Highlands was much troubled by the rivalry of the Clan Kay—the Davidsons—and the Clan Chattan for supremacy. At long last by the advice of the Earls of Murray and Crawford the rival chieftains agreed that thirty of each clan should settle the matter once and for all in the presence of the King at Perth. They were to "fecht with scharp swerdis to the deith, but ony harnes" says Bellenden translating Boece, and the scene of the combat was the North Inch of Perth.

"Thir two clannis stude arrayit with gret hatrent aganis othir; and, be sound of trumpet, ruscht togidder. takand na respect to thair woundis, sa that they micht distroy thair ennimes; and faucht in this maner lang, with uncertane victory. quhen ane fel, ane othir was put in his rowme. At last, the Clankayis war all slane except ane, that swam throw the watter of Tay. Of Glenquhattanis was left xi

¹ *Drake and the Tudor Navy*

² The Drum is illustrated in Lady Elizabeth Elhott-Drake's *The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. II, pl. op. p. 338, *Country Life*, March 11th, 1916.

personis on live; bot thay war sa hurt, that thay micht nocht hald thair swerdis in thair handis."

Thus much for historic fact. Tradition, however, adds that at the most desperate moment of the conflict an aerial bagpiper appeared over the heads of the Clan Chattan, and having played some wild strains upon his pipe let it fall to the ground and vanished. With the exception of the chanter the instrument was of crystal and was shattered by the fall. But the magic chanter, cracked as it is, was secured by the MacPherson piper, and ever after remained in the possession of the family, a talisman whereby the prosperity of the clan was assured. Another version asserts that the existing chanter is only a faithful copy of the original which, like the rest of the pipes, was of crystal.

The Black Chanter has only been out of the possession of the MacPhersons for any length of time upon one occasion. At some period in the first half of the eighteenth century three MacDonalds of Glencoe surprised a strong party of Grants. In the ensuing fray seven Grants were killed, sixteen wounded and the rest took refuge in flight. Their punishment was to walk round the church on three successive Sundays with wooden swords in their hands with straw ropes thereto, repeating the confession, "We are the cowards that ran away." But the Chief of the Clan, desirous to wipe out this disgrace, applied to Cluny for the loan of his chanter, for with this as a mascot Grant felt that his men would overcome any enemy. Cluny replied that his clansmen had no need of the chanter, and was graciously pleased to lend it to Grant. It need scarcely be said that once having obtained possession of the chanter the Grants failed to return it. Nor was it given back until 1822, when Grant of Grantmorriston presented it to Ewan MacPherson of Cluny, grandfather of the present head of the family.¹

Whatever the cause, their customary good fortune certainly seems to have deserted the MacPhersons during the time that the Chanter was out of their possession. The Clan was "out" during the 'Forty-Five. They did not, however, join the rising until the last minute, and they reached Culloden Moor too late to change the fate of the day. Nevertheless, so great was the Clan's reputation

¹ The chanter was lent to the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888 (James Paton *Scottish National Memorials*, 1890, p. 36).

that when it was known that they were on the way to join the Prince, an old spae-wife is said to have warned the Duke of Cumberland to settle the day before the arrival of the green banner of MacPherson. Despite the circumstance that the Clan had taken no active part in the rising, it was proscribed in 1747. Cluny Castle was burned down, Cluny's estates were confiscated, a price set upon his head, and for ten years he remained a fugitive upon his own lands.¹

Another musical luck, but one the history of which only begins in comparatively recent times is that of Woodsome Hall, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The celebrity of the Luck of Edenhall bred, as I have previously said, a spirit of emulation among the great families of the Border, and naturally among the first to follow the example of the Musgraves were the Earls of Dartmouth, who were closely allied to them by marriage. They were the proud possessors of an ancient trumpet, and this they promoted to the rank of a luck, attaching to it the condition that failure to blow upon it upon certain specified occasions would be provocative of ill-fortune. The trumpet is of no very great antiquity. It bears the date of its making and the name of its maker—*Simon Beale, Londini, Fecit 1667*, Beale being the Serjeant Trumpeter to King Charles II and a well-known maker of these instruments.

Philip Musgrave (1661-1689), father of Wharton's "Sir Kit", in 1685 had married Mary Legge, daughter of George Legge (1648-1691), created Lord Dartmouth in 1682 but more generally known, from the rank held by him when he commanded the English forces at Nieuport, in 1678, as Colonel Legge.

Colonel Legge had a distinguished military career, and in the later years of his life he held in turn the offices of Lieutenant-General and Master-General of the Ordnance, and King James II. made him Master of the Horse and Governor of the Tower. As a very young man Legge had, however, held a commission as Lieutenant in the Navy. And in 1667 he was promoted Captain of the *Pembroke*.

¹ A second fairy chanter was the "silver chanter" of the Macrimmons of Borreraig, hereditary pipers of Macleod. It was given to Ian Og Macrimmon by the Queen of the fairies who fell in love with him and his pipe music.

At that period every ship's company included a certain number of trumpeters, whose duties included the sounding of signals and the paying of compliments.¹ And it was no doubt upon the occasion of his promotion that Captain Legge purchased a trumpet from Simon Beale. Woodsome Hall, the northern seat of the Earls of Dartmouth, was acquired through the marriage of George, Viscount Lewisham, father of the second Earl of Dartmouth, with Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Arthur Kaye, baronet, of Woodsome Hall, and there the Colonel's trumpet was preserved as an heirloom.

It is obviously impossible to say at what period the trumpet became the family luck of the Legges, but it was probably fairly late in the eighteenth century. We know that the Musgraves of Edenhall also owned a trumpet, which though not a luck was closely associated with their talisman, being painted with a portrait of the fairy cup as well as their crest and cypher. And I have very little doubt that it was this trumpet that suggested the idea of the Luck of Woodsome Hall.

After remaining the Luck of Woodsome Hall for well over a century, the Colonel's trumpet was sold at Puttick and Simpson's, March, 1922, to Mr. Percival Griffiths, of Sandridgebury, near St. Albans.

¹ The 22nd and 27th rules laid down by Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham, and Robert, Earl of Essex, for the conduct of the expedition to Cadiz in 1596, order that the trumpets and drums, together with the discharge of muskets were to be used to give warning during fogs, and were to be sounded at the watch-setting at eight o'clock each evening. The Rev Henry Teonge in 1675 notes that at four o'clock on Christmas morning the ships' trumpeters "all doe flatt their trumpetts, and begin at our captain's cabine playing a levite at each cabine. After they goe to their station, viz on the poope, and sound 3 levites in honour of the morning." The tune, "Loath to Depart," was commonly played as a salute to distinguished officers when leaving a ship, and an English consul was received with five guns and "Mayds, where are your Hearts?"

CHAPTER XIII

CUPS

"The courteous monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddlebow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright¹

From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,
That burn'd and blighted where it fell!"

WALTER SCOTT : *The Bridal of Triermain*, II, x.

IN a small glass-fronted cabinet in the Tower-room off the Audience Hall in the Royal Castle of the Rosenborg, at Copenhagen, reposes the silver-gilt Horn of Oldenburg—the Luck of the House of Oldenburg, and of the Kings of Denmark. On its preservation, so says tradition following a well recognized formula, depend the fortunes of the Royal House.

According to the legend, first printed in Hamelmann's *Oldenburgisch Chronicon*¹ published in 1599, this talisman came into the possession of the House of Oldenburg in the days of Count Otto, who succeeded his father, Count Ulrich, when the latter retired to the cloister in 938. One unusually hot day Count Otto, who was much addicted to the chase, rode out from his city of Oldenburg with a train of nobles and servants to seek some sport hard by in the Wood of Bernefeuer. In the wood his dogs put up a roe. Recklessly outriding all his companions the Count

¹ Hermann Hamelmann *Oldenburgisch Chronicon*, 1599, pp. 19-21

followed the animal out upon the desolate Osternburger Moor, which stretches mile after mile southwards almost from the city walls. The chase, which was long and swift, brought the Count finally to the summit of the Osenberg, a hill that marks the southern limit of the Moor. But there he lost all trace of his quarry. Nor could he see any sign of the beast either on the Moor at his feet or in the valley of the Hunte to the eastward of the hill.

Sitting his horse, hot and tired by his fruitless pursuit he was moved to exclaim aloud—such was seemingly the frequently disastrous practice of these heroes of Romance—“Oh God! would that I had a cool drink!” Scarcely had the words passed his lips when the highest peak of the Osenberg gaped open and from out of the riven stone came a young and we must believe extremely personable young woman, her hair in two broad plaits upon her shoulders and a garland of flowers about her brow. In her hands she bore a great drinking horn fashioned of silver, gilded and curiously embossed and chased, adorned with coats-of-arms and bearing inscriptions in a tongue that no man might read. Stepping gracefully up to the Count's horse she proffered him the horn, praying him that he would drink. The young woman's somewhat startling appearance, accustomed though the Count must have been, by hearsay at least, to encounters of this surprising nature, bred in him a suspicion of her drink. Lifting the cover of the horn he looked upon the liquor and liked it not. Seeing his hesitation the maiden said, “My dear Lord, drink of it, for by my faith it will do you no harm. It will indeed be greatly to your advantage. For if you do so all will go well with you and yours and with the whole House of Oldenburg after you, and your country shall thrive and flourish. But if you put no faith in me and my drink—there shall no more be unity in the House of Oldenburg.” Still fearful of what might befall him if he yielded to his thirst and the lady's importunities, the Count put the horn behind his back and emptied its contents upon the ground. Some few drops, however, fell upon his horse's rump—and where the liquor fell the hair was burned away. Seeing that nothing would now induce the Count to drink of her witches' brew and that he now understood that she was an elf maiden, the girl

demanded the return of her horn. But wheeling his restive horse the Count set spurs to it and rode off in terror bearing the vessel with him. And as he looked back over his shoulder he saw that his temptress had vanished and that the hill top was once more as nature had made it. When at last he discovered his companions he told them what had occurred

Such, in brief, is the legend of the Horn of Oldenburg, as recounted almost as shortly by Hamelmann. But those who may wish for a fuller version of the story, and one of a fine pseudo-mediaeval flavour should read Mme. Naubert's *Volksmarchen*. Therein the authoress devotes 130 pages to this tale, and almost her every word and incident are the children of that good lady's own imagination.

The "curse," if so high-sounding a title may be accorded to the mountain maiden's promises to Count Otto, has only to a limited extent been justified by events. The chronicle of the elder and royal branch of the House of Oldenburg is a record of luck and un-luck such as is to be looked for in the history of every mediaeval family of prominence. Universal good fortune has not followed the Horn, and the House has often been divided against itself. Disasters, insanity and wholesale homicide have blotted the fair record. But it has at least proved true to this extent from being lords of a low-lying, wind-swept and unfruitful country blotched with moors and stagnant pools on the shores of the German Ocean, the descendants of Count Otto have in the course of time risen to become Dukes of Holstein and Schleswig and Kings of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Nor was it until that Esau among kings, Christian VII of Denmark, in literal interpretation of the prophecy, while yet keeping the Horn, in 1773 sold his birthright, the County of Oldenburg, to the Russian Grand-Duke Paul of Holstein, that real disaster came upon the House of Oldenburg, and the one-time wide empire was curtailed of its fair proportion, until nothing but the crown of Denmark remained to it.

Unhappily there is no substratum of fact in Hamelmann's highly picturesque legend. Count Otto and his monkish father are the figments of the early pedigree makers; historians know no Count of Oldenburg earlier than Egilmar I who was the son of Hajo of Uprustringen and

died in 1108. And the Luck itself, so far from being a fairy goblet, is not even of any very great antiquity

I cannot agree with the learned author of the present official guide to the Rosenborg, Herre Bering Liisberg, when he asserts that the legend "obviously only originated in 1599." Such reputedly elfin vessels, wrought by the hands of goblin smiths, appear in many a legend of the Middle Ages, wherein they are credited with bringing good fortune to their ravishers only so long as the terms of the "curse" laid upon them are duly observed. Hamelmann may conceivably have invented the whole story though this does not seem likely; but if he did so he modelled it upon prototypes of a fine antiquity and of an authenticity held when he wrote to be unimpeachable. At one time there was a dozen or more churches in Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein and the Islands that owned chalices said to have been obtained from the fairies in this unscrupulous way. And coming nearer home there is, or was, a cup in the church of Kirk Merlugh in the Isle of Man, which was believed to have been stolen from the little people. At one time two such cups were precious possessions of the Royal Treasury of England. One, as we have previously noted, was stolen in the reign of Henry I from the fairies that haunted Willey Howe. The second cup, or horn rather, was taken from its elfin guardian who lived beneath a barrow near to Gloucester.¹

Despite the circumstance that the mysterious origin in the distant past claimed for the Horn of Oldenburg cannot be justified, its history, so far as it can be recovered, is, nevertheless, of considerable interest.

It has been suggested with considerable show of probability, if not with certainty, that it is actually the work of the Westphalian goldsmith, Daniel Aretacus of Corvey. Him, according to the *Annales Corbeenses*, Christian VIII, Count of Oldenburg and Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and King of Denmark and Norway, summoned to his Court in 1455² that the master craftsman might fill his cupboards and presses with works of price that should add lustre to the twin Crowns, which Christian had lately assumed. Made somewhere about 1460 or 1470, for King Christian's

¹ See p. 38 *ante* and note

² Daniel Aretacus, singularis artifex in variis sculptilibus, a Rege in Daniam vocatur, qui eum magno in pretio habuit."—*Script. Rerum Brunsvic.* II, p. 318

personal use it bore, as do many other Scandinavian drinking horns of the period, invocations to the Three Kings of Cologne and to the Blessed Virgin, together with precepts less elevating—*baltazar, iacpar, melcior—o mater dei memento mei—in hopen ic leve—im ghenoghee—ich beghere—ave maria—and—drinc al wt.* These were the words in the tongue unknown to Hamelmann.

In 1473 Christian, wearied of constant bickering with his rebellious Swedish subjects, made preparations for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. January, 1474, saw his departure with a train of a hundred and fifty nobles and prelates. Upon the journey he was met by the Emperor, Frederick III. and by the Dukes of Austria and Milan, and at the frontiers of the Papal States he was welcomed by two Cardinals who brought him to the Pope. To Sixtus IV. he made lavish offerings of herrings, cod-fish and ermine-skins, and in return he received at the hands of him who kept the Keys of St. Peter, the highest Papal honour of the Golden Rose, indulgences innumerable, a piece of the True Cross, a wand surmounted by a golden "apple," sundry blessed handkerchiefs and a robe of honour. With such evidences of grace in his possession, Christian felt no call to go on to the Holy Land; so having made a gift of money to a hospital as some sop to his conscience, he returned homewards. Christmas, 1474, he spent at Cologne, and while there he was asked to arbitrate in a quarrel between the Emperor Frederick and Charles the Rash, the Duke of Burgundy. With him upon his journeyings he had brought Aretaeus' goblet, the inscriptions upon which made it a most suitable gift to the shrine of the Three Kings, the patron saints of travellers, to whom it was to be presumed the successful termination of his own pilgrimage was due. Accordingly on Twelfth Night, 1475, he offered the Horn, enriched for the occasion with his own arms, together with the shields of the Emperor, the Duke and the Papal Legate, both as a thank-offering and to ensure the favourable event—in which hope he was disappointed—of his mediation between the Emperor and the Duke.

How it was that this precious object made for Christian of Denmark and given by him to the Cathedral of Cologne came back into the keeping of the family, but a junior branch of it, (the descendants of the King's younger brother,

Gerard of Oldenburg,) has not been explained. During the troubles of the Reformation, however, the Horn, which bears marks of violence, vanished from the Cathedral Treasury, and it is very generally suspected that its disappearance may be laid at the door of a certain Canon of Cologne Cathedral, the staunch Protestant Count Christopher of Oldenburg (1504-1566), who played no small part in the War of the Counts, the *Grafenfelde* of 1534-1536.¹ It had certainly returned to Oldenburg by about 1590, when it was seen by Hamelmann. There it remained until after the death of Anton Gunther, the last Count, in June, 1667, when both it and the County of Oldenburg were inherited by his distant cousin, Frederick III of Denmark. Count Anton Gunther had, however, left a natural son, Anton, who was legitimated in 1654 and created Reichsgraf of Altenburg. This young man having inherited his father's lands of Kniphausen and Varel, not unnaturally felt that he should likewise be Count of Oldenburg, and he energetically disputed his kinsman's claims. Nor was it until nine years after Count Anton's death that Frederick's son, Christian V, entered into possession of the County of Oldenburg and brought the Luck to Denmark. By him it was placed in the royal "Cabinet of Art," whence in 1824 it was transferred to the Rosenborg.

Cups and horns, to which are attached legends similar to that which purports to recount the origin of the Horn of Oldenburg, are so numerous in Scandinavian mythology that this particular type of legend merits a study on its own, and it has certainly met with very generous treatment at the hands of Mr. E. Sidney Hartland. To an antiquary, however, the study is less interesting since only a very few of the actual drinking vessels, about which the stories centre, still survive. And only in rare instances can the legends themselves be traced much farther back than the latter part of the eighteenth century, a period when most writers upon these abstruse subjects saw no particular reason why they should cite the authorities for any statements they might make. Moreover, the tales themselves and their survival were, and still are, alone regarded as important. Personally I confess to a liking for all details,

¹ Count Christopher pawned much of his plate with Otte Krumpen in 1535, but in the list the Horn is not mentioned (*Danske Magazin*, vol. iii, 1747)

and the names of the characters concerned, both of the participants and of those who have related the stories.

Apart from Hamelmann's tale I know of only one other attached to a drinking vessel that can claim any reputable antiquity. It is told by Bishop Jens Nilsson in the journal wherein he recorded the matters and incidents of interest that he noticed on his travels through his diocese in Norway in 1595¹. After chronicling his arrival at Fladal, in Telemarken, he continues—"we then fared from the stream in Fladal in the west half a furlong towards the north-west to Fladal Church, which lies upon the left hand . . . Then up a hill to the north two arrow-flights to a manor house called Aase. There we went into the courtyard and together questioned the woman there about a horn, which is said to have come from a barrow that lies just to the north of the house called Vallerhoug. Then the woman answered that this same horn had been placed in the offertory chest, and that it is now at a manor called 'Ösenaa which lies in Hudesio'. It is told of this horn that a peasant who lived in former times called Gunder Giesemand travelled homewards one Christmas time from Hierdall to his house; and when he came to Vallerhoug he called out and said, 'Listen thou sluggard within Vallerhoug, get up and give Gunder Giesemand a drink.' Then he who lived in the barrow answered 'Yes!', and said to his servant, 'Go out and give him to drink, not of the best and not of the worst'. When Gunder heard this he spurred his horse, and then the one who came out of the mound hurled the horn after him. It struck the horse behind upon the rump, and where it fell the hair and the hide vanished. The horn itself fell into the roadway. And Gunder took it up with his *skudhorne* (a kind of axe so called) and brought it home with him to his house. And thereafter they drank out of this horn, and beat with it upon the table; and at once there was fighting among all those that were in the room."

In most of the stories of this character we find the ravisher donating his spoils to the local church, presumably in the belief that such an action would avert the vengeance of the trolls to whom it had formerly belonged. And it is

¹ Yngvar Nielsen *Biskop Jens Nilssons Vistatsbøger og Reise-optegnelser*, pp 393-394

to be presumed that the offertory chest in which the horn from the Vallerhoug was deposited was that of the church of Fladal. An unusual feature of this legend is, however, the belief—for this seems to be implied—that to drink from one of these elvish horns before it had been consecrated by or gifted to the Church would lead to quarrelling and fighting among those who joined in the revel.

Apparently the Horn of Vallerhoug no longer exists, or at all events its present whereabouts are unrecorded. A second horn obtained in the same way but in more dramatic circumstances used to be in the museum at Arendal in Nedenaes, near Trondhjem, though I failed to find it when I sought for it there in 1914. It is of the usual Scandinavian type, but mounted with three silver gilt rings and bears in black letter the inscription—*potum servorum benedic deus alme [tuorum reliquam unus benedic le un] Caspar, Melchior, baltazar*

This horn was long a prized possession of the family of a man named Siur, who lived at the farm of Neersteen, on the banks of the Nid, in Nedenaes. He was a man of very considerable wealth owning six other farms and a considerable salmon fishery in the Nid. The only cloud upon his domestic horizon was the circumstance that his daughter was in love with a Westland man, named Ring, who was less well blessed with worldly goods. Nothing daunted by parental disapproval, the lovers made up their minds to fly together. One St. John's Day, when the stern father had gone to church at Øiestad, having previously locked his daughter up in one of the presses in his house, Ring came to Neersteen, found the girl and rode off with her. When Siur returned and found his daughter gone he pursued the couple. On the way he was stopped by a troll who, following the time-honoured custom, offered him a drink. Siur in the approved fashion carried off the horn and was promptly pursued hot foot, only making his escape by riding, on the advice of a second troll, through the rye, which impeded his pursuer. When at last he overtook his would-be son-in-law and his daughter the men drew their knives, and after a few passes Siur stabbed the younger man in the belly, of which wound he promptly died. What happened to the girl history does not relate; but the horn, after remaining

in Siur's family for several generations, was presented early last century by Captain Berge to the museum at Arendal.¹

The Fairy Banner is not the only talisman of the Macleods of Skye now or aforetime preserved at Dunvegan; but the other two palladia of the family have been endowed with this character rather by the circumstance of their long association with the Macleods and from the fact that one is a relic of an ancestor. This latter is the horn of Rory Mor, Sir Roderick Mor Macleod. The other, no longer at Dunvegan, is,

“ . the mighty cup
Erst own'd by royal Somerled,”

thane of Argyle and Lord of the Isles in the twelfth century—or so says Sir Walter Scott. “The family tradition,” Scott adds in his notes to the *Lord of the Isles*, “bears that it was the property of Neil Ghlune-dhu, or the Black-knee. But who this Neil was no one pretends to say.” Scott's knowledge of Irish mythology and pseudo-history was neither so extensive nor so intimate as his knowledge of the same matters when they related to Caledonia. Had it been he would undoubtedly have recognized in the legendary owner of the Cup that Niall (870²–919), King of Tara, the son of Aedh Finliath, who is first called Glundubh by the chroniclers in 909, but for what reason is unrecorded. It was he who in the last year of his reign revived the Aonach Tailteu, the Fair of Teltown. The obvious implication of the Macleod legend is that the Cup was the royal cup of Niall, and that it had been carried off from Ireland by some remote ancestor in a raid upon the shores of Meath.

The Cup, of methyr shape, is fashioned of some close-grained wood, probably alder, and mounted with silver-gilt enriched with niello and formerly set with gems of which only a few corals remain to testify to its one-time splendour.

The account of the origin of the Cup, as graven in what Walter Scott persistently called “the Saxon black-letter” about its silver-gilt rim, is nearly as vague, and,

¹ Thorpe *Northern Mythology*, vol. II, pp. 14–15

when interpreted by the Wizard of the North, nearly as romantic.

The inscription according to him ran,

“Ufo Johis . Mich . || Mgn Pncipis De . ||
Hr . Manae . Vich : || Liahia Mgryneil ||
Et Spat . Do : Ihu . Da : || Clea Illoru Opa . ||
Fecit : Ano : Di . Ir : 930 || Omli . Oimi . ”

which he translated as—

“Ufo [the son] of John, the son of Magnus Prince of Man, the grandson of Liahia Macgryneil trusts in the Lord Jesus that their works will obtain mercy Oneil Oimi made this in the year of God nine hundred and ninety-three (*sic*) ”

Sir Walter was unable to offer any interpretation of the *Hr* before *Manae*; but he justified the use of Arabic numerals at this early date since they were introduced by Pope Sylvester A.D. 991. With all due respect to the Wizard, his interpretation could scarcely have been bettered by his own creation, *Monkbarns*, with his *Agricola Dicabit Libens Libens* or his even better translation of *Ille Caledonus posuit qui castra prunis*.

A most careful study of the cup was made by Dr (afterwards Sir) Daniel Wilson and the results of his researches were published by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.¹

The inscription was correctly transcribed as—

“Kahia nigryneill uxor johis m̃eg m̃gir p̃ncipis de firmanac, me fi. fecit Año dō' 1493". Oculi om̃i i te spāt dō' et tu da' escā illor̃ i t' op̃.”

[Katharina nig Ryncell, uxor Johannis meg Maguir, Principis de Firmanach me fieri fecit Anno Domini 1493 Oculi omnium in te sperant Domine, et tu das escam illorum in tempore opportuno]

Katharine MacRannall, wife of John Maguire, Prince of Firmanagh, caused me to be made, in the year of God

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, N.S., vol. 1, p. 8

The transcription is that given in the *Proceedings* and not in the earlier *Prehistoric Annals*.

A Chalice made to the order of Conosus Maguire, King of Firmanagh in 1529 is in the Roman Catholic Church at Fernyhalgh, Lancashire

1493. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. [Ps. cxlv., 15]

Little is known of John, son of the Maguire, and that little is discreditable. In 1484, according to *The Annals of the Four Masters*, along with his four brothers he murdered the sixth, Gillpatrick, at the altar of the Church of Aghaluraher, the cause of this fratricide being the question of the chieftainship. He died in 1511. His wife's name is not recorded, but a Catherine daughter of MacRannall is noticed as married to a Maguire in 1490.

The cup, therefore, unquestionably came from Ireland as the family tradition, connecting it with Niall of the Black-knee, suggested. But how it came into the possession of the Lords of Dunvegan is a problem that is not easy of solution. It is possible, however, that there were two Nialls in the legend when it first appeared—Niall, King of Tara, the legendary owner of the Cup, and Neil, some freebooting Macleod who carried it off from Ireland—and that in due time the greater name absorbed the lesser. The freebooter may well have been Neil Macleod, the fourth of Gesto, who lived in the early sixteenth century. The name Neil only occurs in the Gesto branch of the family.¹ It was his grandson, John the sixth of Gesto, who, having murdered his brother-in-law in a drunken quarrel, was deprived of his lands in Glenelg—held for generations under the chiefs of Macleod—together with much more of his property, by Sir Rory Mor, the thirteenth of Dunvegan, about 1610.²

¹ Mackenzie *The Macleods*, p. 188 *et seq*

² An interesting instance of the offer of a fairy cup is recorded in a letter from Moses Pitt to Dr Edward Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester, printed in 1696, and preserved in Morgan's *Phœnix Britannicus*, 1732. The would-be donor was one Anne Jefferies, born in the parish of St Teath, Cornwall, in 1626, who from her childhood had been an associate of the fairies. Her mistress to whom the cup was offered refused to accept it.

CHAPTER XIV

KINGS AND CROWNS

"Then he opened the coffer and took out a crown of gold, so curiously wrought, and set with pearls and gems that all were amazed at its beauty . . . it hath a virtue more to be esteemed than its rare work and richness. Whatever king hath it on his head shall always increase his honour; this it did for him for whom it was made till the day of his death."

Amadis of Gaul.

WHETHER he was regarded by his subjects as the descendant of a god and therefore as more than half divine, or merely as a potent wizard, a king in early times and among primitive peoples was believed to emit magical virtue for his heges' good, a virtue that enabled him to control the course of nature, to quicken the seed in the earth, to produce stalwart male children and to shield his people. Nor was this radiation of reproductive and protective energy supposed to cease with the monarch's death. As a consequence the people deemed it essential to preserve his body, endowed as it still was with magical virtue of the most tremendous potency, as a pledge of the continued prosperity of the country. And any sign of the waning of this virtue in either the living monarch or in his talismanic body was regarded by his followers with the most lively apprehension and by his enemies with rejoicing.

The *Heimskringla* enshrines an illuminating instance of what was held to be the departure of this power from the person of the King. At the battle of Stamford Bridge, Harold Sigurdson was mounted upon a black horse, and when the King was reviewing his host, the beast stumbled

and threw him. Harold accepted it as a good omen with the words, "A fall is lucky for a traveller."

"The English king Harold said to the Northmen who were with him, 'Do ye know the stout man who fell from his horse, with the blue kirtle and the beautiful helmet?'

"That is the king himself," said they.

"The English king said, 'A great man, and of stately appearance he is; but I think his luck has left him.'"¹

These beliefs seem to have been shared by the ancestors of all the Aryan peoples from India to Ireland, and have even been borrowed by celestials.

As we have earlier noticed, relics figured largely as talismans both personal and communal in the Middle Ages. And in no aspect of mediaeval life was this commingling of religious belief and heathen superstition more noticeable than in the sacring of the Kings of Europe. There was scarcely a regalia that did not include some relic, the memento of a saint or national hero, that did not play some important part in the most impressive ceremonial of the coronation. And traces of this practice are yet to be found even in England. The English Regalia is a symposium of etiological myths. Despite the circumstance that the ancient sacred emblems were destroyed during the Commonwealth the present regalia contains a Curtana, so named in memory of the fabled sword of the Confessor, and St. Edward's Spurs. But it is St. Edward's Crown and the Coronation Chair, known as St. Edward's Chair, that have been endowed most completely with the character of national talismans. St. Edward's Crown, which replaced the ancient "Crown of Alfred" so-called, is essentially *the* Crown. It is the Crown the touch of which upon the royal brow after the consecration makes the wearer King of England. Moreover, the King only wears it once in a lifetime, at the supreme, moment of the Coronation.

The very close relationship between the semi-divine king and the emblems of his kingship, the strengthening of the magical powers inherent in the talismanic and amuletic crown as the result of close association, and the transfer of these magical properties to an individual, not of necessity of this exalted origin, are most ably set forth and explained,

¹ *The Heimskringla*, edit. Samuel Laing, 1889, Bk. ix, cp. xciii, vol. iv, p. 43.

in so far as such conceptions are explainable, by Sir James Frazer, though the passage was written to elucidate the practices indulged by the Thebans at their octennial festival of the Laurel-bearing.

"Probably in many cases wreaths and crowns were amulets before they were ornaments; in other words, their first intention may have been not so much to adorn the head as to protect it from harm by surrounding it with a plant, a metal, or any other thing which was supposed to possess the magical virtue of banning baleful influences. On this hypothesis we can understand not only why sacred persons such as priests and kings wore crowns, but also why dead bodies, sacrificial victims, and in certain circumstances even inanimate objects such as the implements of sacrifice, the doors of houses, and so forth, were decorated or rather guarded by wreaths. Further, on this hypothesis we may perhaps perceive why children of living parents were specially chosen to cut or wear sacred wreaths. Since such children were apparently supposed to be endowed with a more than common share of vital energy, they might be deemed peculiarly fitted to make or wear amulets which were designed to protect the wearer from injury and death: the current of life which circulated in their own veins overflowed, as it were, and reinforced the magic virtue of the wreath."¹

Elsewhere in *The Golden Bough* Frazer provides some interesting examples of this transferred power. In the southern Celebes, he says—"the royal authority is supposed to be in some mysterious fashion embodied in the regalia, while princes owe all the power they exercise, and all the respect they enjoy, to their possession of these precious objects. In short, the regalia reign, and the princes are merely their representatives. Hence whoever happens to possess the regalia is regarded by the people as their lawful king."²

In the light, however, of his own explanation of the Theban customs and beliefs the mystery would not seem so great as he suggests. And no more illuminating parallel to the beliefs explicit and implicit attached to mediaeval regalia could be found.

¹ Frazer: *Adonis, Atlas, Onrus*, pp. 419-420.

² Frazer: *The Magic Art*, vol. 1, p. 363

Traces of the talismanic properties of the various items of the royal ornaments are to be found everywhere. In ancient Egypt the two royal crowns were endowed with the magic virtues, were indeed divinities.¹ The sceptre of Agamemnon, or what passed for such, was worshipped as a god at Chaeronea, and daily sacrifices made to it.²

The imperial crown of Japan was regarded as a talisman which by its immobility could preserve peace within the Empire—and every morning it was placed upon the imperial throne and left there for some hours.³

Not unnaturally in these circumstances any mishandling of a sacred diadem was tantamount to sacrilege, and both merited and met with condign punishment at the hands of its custodians or the officers of the law. But on occasion these emblems were credited with ability if not to defend themselves at least to wreak vengeance upon those guilty of such an offence. The Emperor Maurice, who was assassinated in 602, at some period set over the high altar of the great Cathedral of Byzantium, now the Mosque of St Sophia, a splendid votive crown richly set with carbuncles. There it hung, according to Theophanes, until one day in 780 the Emperor Leo IV. saw it and coveted it. Whether by force or by the connivance of its guardians, the Emperor obtained possession of it and wore it, and was promptly struck down by a fearful eruption of carbuncles which within a short while carried him off. On which most singularly appropriate fate Baronius,⁴ who retells the incident, observes—"Amans igitur carbunculos, ex sacrilegio carbunculos pariter passus est, et his coronatus, est mortuus."

The sacred character possessed by kingly diadems is perhaps hinted at in the fictitious origin of the Arabian charm known as the *herz l-Andarun*. This cabalistic sign, written upon linen, was worn stitched into his crown by an infidel king called l'Andarun. On him it conferred great power and made him the terror of all the neighbouring peoples. But on one occasion he was attacked by True Believers, whereupon an angel descended from the skies

¹ Frazer *The Magic Art*, vol. 1, p. 364

² Pausanias, ix, 40, 11

³ Frazer *Taboo*, p. 4

⁴ Caesar Baronius *Annales Ecclesiastici*, vol. xiii, p. 143

in the likeness of a bird, snatched off his crown and dropped it into the Mohammedan camp. Thereafter the King was defeated and compelled to fly.¹

In the Middle Ages there was scarcely a crown that did not contain among its gems some outstanding talismanic stone, that rendered wise and unconquerable its wearer. Albertus Magnus devotes a lengthy passage to the milk-white opal, *Orphanus*, the greatest gem of the Imperial crown—"fertur autem quod honorem servat regalem."²

So deeply rooted at least in the popular mind was this belief in the talismanic character of the royal crown and in the virtue conferred by it upon its wearer, that Henry III., who was crowned at Gloucester in 1216, but with a golden circlet only, was, when the storm clouds of civil war had blown away, consecrated a second time at Westminster in 1220 with the diadem of England that had for the best part of a decade been securely held for him behind the stout walls of Corfe Castle, in the Isle of Purbeck.

This deep reverence accorded to the kingly diadem had its practical value as well, as is demonstrated by the history of the so-called "Crown of Vladimir II Monomachus," King of Kief (1113-1126), in the former Imperial Russian Treasury, to which legend supplied an exalted, and for the Czars of Russia, most profitable origin. Early in the twelfth century Vladimir is asserted to have made war upon the Eastern Emperor Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118) and invaded Thrace. And such fear did the Russian hordes inspire in the breasts of their soft and luxury-loving enemies that the Bishop of Ephesus was promptly despatched to the camp of Vladimir bearing most precious gifts in an attempt to persuade him to abandon his campaign. This bribe included the great cornelian cup of Augustus Caesar and the throne and crown of Vladimir's grandfather, the Eastern Emperor Constantine X. Monomachus (1042-1054), and with this historic diadem the Bishop crowned Vladimir sovereign of Russia. It is now realized that this crown can never have belonged to Vladimir—it is of a much later date—and it cannot therefore have been the diadem of an even earlier Emperor of Byzantium. But Vladimir's descendants encouraged the legend. It was imperative for

¹ Edward Westermarck *Ritual and Beliefs in Morocco*, 1926, vol. 1, p. 215.

² Grimm *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. III, p. 1217.

them to prove that these emblems of their power were traceable to their ancestor, the King of Kief, and to prove that the Russian Monomachus, grandson of the Greek Monomachus, had been solemnly crowned by order of the Emperor as sovereign of Russia.¹

English history is not lacking an instance of a similar use of a royal crown.

It was fully realized by Richard of Conisborough, Earl of Cambridge, and his fellow conspirators, in 1415, that unless they could produce the Crown of England at the right moment their plans to set up Roger Mortimer, the young Earl of March, in place of Henry V. were foredoomed to failure. The Crown of St. Edward was beyond their reach either in the secret chamber within the stout walls of the White Tower or in the sanctuary at Westminster. The Imperial Crown, "Great Harry," the King's personal crown, had been pawned in sections to meet the King's need with four of his loyal subjects. And the crown of King Richard II. had for the same reason been pledged with the Abbot of Westminster. In fraud alone there lay the only way out of the difficulty. And there existed at that time a fourth crown, the "pallet of Spain," actually the head-piece and royal diadem of Pedro the Cruel of Castille that Don Pedro's daughter, Constance, the second wife of John of Gaunt, had brought to England. It had subsequently passed to the Kings of the House of Lancaster and in 1415 had been pawned by King Henry for the sum of 500 marks. This emblem of royalty the traitors determined to seize, and then having assassinated the King and carried Mortimer away with them to the Marches of Wales where they were certain of support from Glendower and his followers, they proposed to pass off this crown as that of England and with it to crown the pretender. And when they marched upon London it was their intention that this visible emblem of the Earl's right to the throne should be borne before him in the van of the army upon a cushion in the sight of all. Mortimer was, however, loyal to his guardian, and the conspiracy was blown upon, with the usual unpleasant results to the promoters and their associates.

It may not be inappropriate to stress at this point a matter that has hitherto received far too little attention.

¹ Jones *Crowns and Coronations* p 389

Those who for one reason or another have touched upon the history of the ancient regalia of England have too often confused not only the Sacred and privy Regalias but the crowns as well—the Crown of St. Edward, or Alfred as it was sometimes and equally incorrectly termed, and the Crown Imperial, the personal diadem of the King, to which no sacred and talismanic character was attached. It was the latter crown—and lesser circlets made for various occasions—that was so frequently pawned or even broken up by distressed monarchs to meet their immediate necessities. And there exists no evidence that the Crown of St. Edward, of which we possess a reasonably complete and accurate description as it existed in 1649, was ever subjected to any material alterations other than those very minor ones necessitated, as in the case of the coronation of Henry III., by its use for a few minutes by a boy king.

Nevertheless, it is not improbable that the Imperial Crown, merely by its association with the King, became invested with something of his sacred character, while the talismanic and amuletic properties of the gems which adorned it cannot have failed to endow it with most potent virtues. In Richard Maidstone's poem on the deposition of Richard II. we learn that Richard wore,

" . . . a croune, that kyng under hevene
Mighte not a better have boughte, as I trowe,
So ffull was it filled with vertuous stones,
With perlis of prise to punnysshe the wrongis,
With rubies rede the righth for to deme,
With gemmes and juellis joyned to-gedir,
And pees amonge the peple flor peyne of thi lawis
It was ffull goodeliche y-grave with gold al abouthte;
The braunchis above boren grett charge,
With diamauntis derne y-downtid of all
That wroute ony wrake within or withoute;
With lewte and love y-loke to thi peers,
And sapheris swete that soughte all wrongis,
Y-poudride wyth pete ther it be oughte,
And traylid with trouthe, and treste al aboute,
Ffor ony cristen kynge a croune well y-makyd."¹

¹ *Alliterative Poem on the Deposition of King Richard II.*, edited by Thomas Wright for the Camden Society, 1838, pp. 5 and 6

Even as late as the sixteenth century we find the Imperial Crown enriched with sacred figures that should add to this property. A detailed description of this diadem drawn up on February 14th, 1520-1, makes mention of the effigies thereon of St. George the Patron Saint of England, the Virgin and Child and those most potent protectors the Three Kings of Cologne.¹

The Crown Imperial of England—which now passes under the less impressive name of the State Crown—only incorporates one talismanic jewel, the great so-called “ruby” that Pedro the Cruel, a connoisseur of precious stones and one with distinctly unconventional methods of adding to his collection, stole from his murdered guest, the Red King of Granada, and gave to his ally the Black Prince after Navarete. It is said to have been one of the jewels in the crown that Henry V. bore upon his bacinet at Agincourt, and if so Henry must have removed it either from the crown of Richard II. before he pawned that diadem or from his own crown, the Great Harry, before it, too, was broken up. Legend also has it that it was in the fleuron that was lopped from the crown in the battle and thereby saved the King’s life. It was the “fair ruby great like a rocket-ball” that Elizabeth shewed to the ambassador of the Queen of Scots, and if so cannot have appeared in the crown of Henry VIII, which was the Imperial Crown destroyed in 1649. It was sold then for £4 and later recovered.

Such philosophical speculations, though justified by the exceptional interest of the subject, and one which has, moreover, apparently not been touched upon even by that sound antiquary, William Jones, in his *Crowns and Coronations*, must give place to example. Elsewhere² I have given a brief account of the discovery of the Crown of Ladislaus surnamed Lokietak, Ladislaus the Span-long, King of Poland; and if I recapitulate its principal features and extend them I must be forgiven, for the incident not only conveys the sentiments attaching to such a national talisman, but affords an example of the justification of the belief in modern times.

¹ Associated Architectural Societies—*Reports and Papers*, vol. xvii (1883) pp. 158 and 159

² *The Romance of Treasure Trove* pp 136-138.

The roar of the Russian guns at the battle of Maciejowice on October 10th, 1794, sounded the knell of the ancient kingdom of Poland and within a few days of the disaster her ancient regalia, the crowns of her kings and the great sword of Stanislaus disappeared. Lenz has traced the wanderings of these baubles from the time that they were last inventoried in 1792 till they vanished from sight in Russia in 1804. What their ultimate fate was will probably never be known, though it was at one time fondly believed that the sword of Stanislaus had found its way to the Imperial Collection in the Hermitage at Petrograd. A tradition, however, existed that *the* Crown of Poland yet survived and was preserved in the care of a noble family of Galicia, the secret of its hiding place being known only to the head of his family and his eldest son¹ Poland, in the past, has had many crowns. In the Cathedral of St. Stanislaus within the walls of the Royal Castle of Cracow is a golden cross enriched with gems and niello made of the crowns of Ladislaus II. Jagellon (*reg.* 1386-1434) and of his queen, Jadwiga. And nearby is the crown of Casimir the Great with which the last unhappy King of Poland, Stanislaus (II) Augustus Poniatowski was crowned in 1764. But the identity of this fabled vanished crown is unrecorded. Nor has any such diadem yet come to light. But about 1911 a gem-set crown was discovered, buried within the rusted headpiece upon which it had once been worn, beneath an oak tree in a village in Russian Poland. It is of gilt metal set with sixty-five precious stones, and fashioned, in the manner of most mediaeval crowns, of several panels, four in this case, connected by hinges. Each panel is topped by a fleuron and about its lower edge is a series of twin holes, through which passed the arming laces which once held this diadem in place upon the headpiece. It was immediately hailed as the lost crown of Ladislaus Lokietak, the hero-king of Poland, who died in 1333; and now, in company with the Swords of Stanislaus Augustus, and Sigismund Augustus, and the Sacred Spear of St. Maurice, it fills an honoured place in the Treasury of St. Stanislaus in the capital of the republic of Poland.

¹ Marie Anne de Bovet *Cracovie*, 1910, p. 84 n. The so-called "Crown of Poland" in the old Imperial Treasury of Russia is, or was, comparatively modern, having been made for the Empress Anne, *reg.* 1730-1740 (William Jones *Crowns and Coronations*, p. 390)

The late Sir Guy Laking, was somewhat sceptical of its popular attribution.¹ From the fashion of the head-piece found with it he was tempted to assign both diadem and bacinet not to Ladislaus but to his successor Casimir III. This crown, however, except that it is open and not closed, is of exactly the same construction as the famous Crown of Karl IV. of Bohemia in the Treasury of St. Veit at Prague. And this latter crown, we know from a contemporary inscription on its fourteenth century case, was made in 1347.

I can, therefore, see no valid reason for rejecting the suggestion that the "Crown of Ladislaus" may have been made in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. And the probability that the bacinet with which it was found is of a later date does not invalidate the suggestion.

¹ Laking (*Record of European Armour and Arms*, vol. 1, pp. 234 and 235) was mistaken when he wrote that this crown was discovered about 1914.

CHAPTER XV

SWORDS

"Swerdys and stauys that thei bere
Ther iesu cryste to fere with there—
From fendys, lorde, kepe thou me,
Of them, lorde, a-ferd that I not be"¹

The Symbols of the Passion.

CONSIDERING the vast body of legendary lore that has gathered in the course of ages about ancient swords of heroic ownership or of fairy origin, it is surprising that so few—outside the pages of romantic fiction—have achieved immortality or even temporary fame as talismans. So scarce indeed are they that for an example that should, judged by the fine full flavour of romance that has grown about it and for the unpleasant fate that awaited its possessors, be they mediaeval and European, we are compelled to turn to the Far East. But in palliation of this flight it is only proper to note that the Oriental regards, and has always regarded, the Queen of Weapons with a fanatical devotion worthy of a Highlander.

One of the most entertaining passages in Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, the digested fruits of sundry French expeditions into the interior of Cambodia, describes the functions of the King of Fire and the King of Water, the two mysterious sovereigns of the Chréais or Jaray tribe, which inhabits the forest-clad mountains and high tablelands between Cambodia and Annam. The whole passage reads like some extract from one of the less incredible chapters of Marco Polo's *Travels*. These joint sovereigns, whose high offices are hereditary in one or perhaps two

¹ Brit Mus., Add MS. 22,029—*Legends of the Holy Rood*, edit. by Richard Morris for the Early English Text Society, 1871, vol. xlv., p. 175. I have extended the mediaeval contractions of the original text.

families, reign only for seven years. Each sovereign resides for one year in each of seven towers perched upon the tops of seven mountains. At the end of seven years, if they have lived so long, they are "removed" by their devoted subjects and their bodies burned. Thereafter their successors are chosen. But competition for kingly honours, one is led to believe, is not keen. Indeed no sooner is the death of one or both sovereigns known than all his kinsmen take to the woods whence the chosen monarch has to be hunted by his future subjects.

It is not, however, with their lives, the customs or the attributes of the Kings of the Chréais that we are concerned, but with the talismans owned by this royal family, the sacred relics which make them kings and the virtues of which, it is believed, would be dissipated if they passed out of their keeping. They are three in number. The first is the fruit of a creeper called *Cut*, gathered long ages ago at the time of the last deluge, but still fresh and green. The second is a very ancient rattan that despite its age bears flowers that never fade. The third is a sword inhabited by a *van*, or spirit, that guards it constantly and works miracles with it. This spirit is said to be that of a slave whose blood chanced to fall upon the blade when it was being forged and who elected to die in expiation of his involuntary offence.¹

Among celebrated talismanic arms must be included—though I am averse from calling upon the resources afforded by the myths and histories of savage peoples save by way of illustration—the golden Axe of Ashanti, which was surrendered by King Mensa in 1881, and sent to Queen Victoria. This weapon was held to be so potent a talisman that in the periodical ceremonial processions it took precedence even of the Golden Stool, which in Ashanti enjoyed a position analogous to that possessed by the Stone of Jacob in the Coronation Chair of St. Edward at Westminster. Until he had been duly "stooled" upon this talisman no elected King of Ashanti was king in fact or could draw upon the royal treasury at Bautama. And in 1888 the British Government had to lend Osai Kwaka Dua III, better known as Prempeh, four hundred pounds to pay for his "coronation," since at the time he was entirely without money.

¹ Frazer *The Magic Art* vol. II, p. 5.

According to legend this axe had at one time belonged to a king of Ashanti, one of those legendary and heroic figures who abound in the myths of every people. It is fashioned of gold and bound with leopard skin emblematic of the wealth and courage of the king and his people. When in 1874 King Kofi Karikari had been properly punished for his misdemeanours by the British and subsequently deposed by his own subjects, his brother Mensa, an equally tyrannical and bloody-minded despot, was placed upon the Golden Stool. In recognition of his dependence upon the goodwill of the British people Mensa was required to surrender this emblem of his authority to the Governor of the Gold Coast. At first he absolutely refused to do this. Message after message was sent to him, but he still declined to obey. At last he explained to his chiefs assembled in council that "this Axe is an emblem of such high sovereignty, that if I yield it up, and it is kept on the coast, I shall yield all the power I possess, and my neighbours and the Fantees will laugh at me." It was thereupon suggested that Mensa's good friend, Captain Barrow, should be asked to approach the Governor of the Gold Coast and to request that if the Axe were surrendered, it might be sent to the Queen of England. To this proposal the King finally agreed, and he sent Acampong, one of his principal advisers, to Captain Barrow. The latter sent Acampong to the Governor, and by his Excellency's orders the Axe was sent in charge of Barrow to England in 1881, where no scoffing neighbours might see it and make a mock of Mensa's fallen authority.¹

The Ashanti nation was, however, blessed with a number of lesser talismans, one of which is of unusual interest not for beliefs attached to it but for the romantic speculations to which it gives rise. Among the spoils taken at Ashanti in 1896 was the late fourteenth century large bronze jug cast with badges an inscription now in the Department of Mediaeval Antiquities at the British Museum. A second jug taken during the punitive expedition of 1891 was kept as a memento by the late Sir Cecil Hamilton Armitage, K.B.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., who, as Captain Armitage, commanded the faithful native levies on that occasion. This ewer, which is also in the British Museum,

¹ Jones. *Crowns and Coronations*, pp. 445-446

was the great war fetish of the people of Ashanti and was always taken by them into battle.

How these jugs, both of the late fourteenth century and of English origin, came to Ashanti must always remain a mystery, but they can scarcely be held as indicative "of the early trade communication between Europe and the West Coast of Africa." They are more likely to be part of the spoils taken in some forgotten exploit of the Barbary pirates, that in the course of time wandered southwards from the Mediterranean coast. The trial, however, of Jacques Cœur, the famous silversmith of Charles VII., in 1452, at least affords some evidence of trade in armour and arms between France and the court of the Soldan of Babylon in the fifteenth century.¹ Yet it is a far cry from Cairo to Ashanti.

The most celebrated Ashanti fetish is, however, the Golden Stool, which, as I have said, enjoys a position analogous to that of the Stone of Destiny in Westminster Abbey. Its history, so far as it can be recovered, reads much like a chapter from some mediaeval chronicle. It was already an ancient and revered talisman in the early years of the nineteenth century, when Adinkira, King of Jaman (or Gyaman), greatly daring, made a similar golden stool that thereby he and his people, too, might enjoy the benefits that the possession of such a talisman gave. Such temerity was not to be borne. War was declared between the two peoples. Adinkira was defeated, captured and slain, and his golden stool melted down. Of the metal a death mask of the slain monarch was made and this was added to the other similar grisly trophies attached to the Golden Stool.

In 1888 the people of Jaman, however, still believed, or professed to believe, that theirs was the stool of Kumassi, and in that year they seriously contemplated war to recover it.²

The Golden Stool was not taken from Kumassi after the war of 1873 and 1874. But it was one of the objects the surrender of which was called for by the treaty that ended

¹ The magnificent "great bacinet" of about 1420 from Kordofan in the British Museum is generally regarded as affording concrete evidence of this trade. Other headpieces, but of a much later date—early sixteenth century—have come from the upper waters of the Nile. And these would at least appear to be relics of the Turkish-Christian wars of the early sixteenth century.

² R. Austin Freeman *Travels and Life in Ashanti and Jaman*, 1898, p. 208

the war of 1895-1896. The Stool itself was, however, securely hidden and only a small part of the stipulated tribute of 4,000 ounces of gold yearly was paid to the British Government.

Early in 1900 Sir Frederick Hodgson, Governor of the Gold Coast, paid a visit to Kumassi. In January of that year an attempt had been made to locate the hiding place of the Golden Stool and to capture it. This had failed. Sir Frederick arrived at Kumassi on March 25th, and on the 28th, in a palaver he reproached the chiefs of Ashanti for not having handed over the Stool and for having defaulted in their payment. Meanwhile news of the hiding place leaked out and three days later a party of Haussas, under the command of Captain Armitage, of the Gold Coast Constabulary, and the Governor's Private Secretary, and Captain Leggett of the same force, were sent to the village to take it. They were fired upon, both officers were wounded, and the party forced to retire. These were the first shots of the Ashanti rebellion of 1900.¹

Returning to the subject of talismanic arms after this somewhat lengthy digression, Attila, King of the Huns, became accidentally possessed of a sword said to have been that of the god Mars, and by its aid he hoped to gain the Kingship of the World.

"The discovery of the Sword of Mars, ever held sacred among the Kings of the Scythians gave him [Attila] an added assurance. Priscus, the historian, records its discovery in the following circumstances. A certain herdsman upon examination found that one of the heifers in his drove was lame; and being unable to find the cause of the wound, in trepidation he followed the trail of blood and at length came upon the sword, which the heifer, browsing upon the herbage, had incautiously trodden upon; and having dug it up he brought it forthwith to Attila. The latter, overjoyed at this gift, for he was princely minded, believed that he was foreordained the master of the whole world, and that through this Sword of Mars he should become the Lord of Wars."²

The majority of the heroic swords of the Sagas were

¹ H. C. J. Buss *The Relief of Kumasi*, 1901, p. 193. See also R. S. Rattray: *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 1927, p. 131 note.

² Jornandes: *De Rebus Geticis*, cap. xxxv.

credited with the possession of no talismanic qualities. Hrunting and Mimung were only of an abnormal temper and sharpness by reason that they had been forged by the goblin smith Wayland. So, too, was the great sword, Macabuin, made for Olaf Goddardson, King of Norway, by Loan Maclibuin the Dark Smith of Trondhjem.¹ And no claim that they possessed either amuletic or oracular powers was made for the two Quern-biters, the swords of Haco I. and Thoralf Skolinson.

A few, however, if not exactly endowed with the gift of speech, were at least credited with the power of prophecy. I am unaware of any very close mediaeval parallel to the sword that Sir Walter Scott's hero *Cospatrick* made an uncomfortable practice of taking to his numerous bridal couches, for the purpose of asking it questions about the virtue of the various ladies whom he married—

“And speak up, my bonny brown sword, that winna lee,
Is this a true maiden that lies by me?”

But these oracular weapons were frequently appealed to by their owners for presages of victory or defeat. Skofnung, the wondrous sword, of Hrolf Kraka, possessed this virtue. On his death it was placed in his tomb, whence it was taken by the rover, Skeggo, who gave it to his son-in-law, Kormak, with instructions for its use. Attached to the hilt was a bag of charms which must never be opened; nor must the sunlight fall upon the pommel, it must never be drawn except for battle, and when Kormak was preparing to use it he must go apart from his companions, unsheathe it and breathe upon the blade, when a worm would come from the hilt. Kormak neglected these instructions, wherefore good fortune deserted his sword, which, when he drew it, emitted a hollow groan.²

Angurvadal (Stream of Anguish), the weapon of Frithiof, the hero of the thirteenth century Icelandic *Frithiofsaga*, bore engraved upon the blade runes which blazed with an unholy light in time of war, but sank to a glow during peace.

And Edmund Spenser, in 1596, writing of the manners and superstitions of the Irish says that—“at this day when

¹ A. W. Moore *The Folklore of the Isle of Man*, 1891, pp. 28-29—after Train.

² Thomas Bartholinus *Antiquitatum Danicarum, etc.* 1689 Lib. II, cp. XIII, 573-575

they goe to battaile, they say certaine prayers or charmes to their swordes, making a crosse therewith upon the earth, and thrusting the points of their blades into the ground, thinking thereby to have better successe in fight."

In Teutonic mythology some few swords are credited with possessing the power to reveal the identity of those for whom a high destiny waits. Sigmund's ability to pluck forth the sword Gram, thrust deep into the roof-tree by Odin, proves the hero's fitness for the tasks that lie before him. And a similar test is applied in the Arthurian cycle both to Galahad and to Arthur. Galahad draws the sword from the floating stone and thereby proves that he is the knight destined to occupy the Siege Perilous. And Arthur draws the sword Excalibur that stood, until he takes it, in "a great stone four square, like unto a marble stone, and in midst thereof was like an anvil of steel a foot on high, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus:—Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England."¹

Though we must regard certain elements in these incidents as fictitious, the outcome of the natural tendency of myth-makers at all periods to make the marvellous still more amazing, there is nothing inherently improbable in the foundation story of the sword and the stone. No wizard, however hard he worked his spells, could then or now make anvils float or thrust sword blades through blocks of iron. These are but trimmings to the tale. But any stonemason of experience could have told him that there are certain stones, but little harder when cut, than good Cheddar cheese that on exposure to the air become hard and durable. Anyone knowing this property might work a marvel, and the counterpart of Excalibur is yet to be found still sticking in the living stone—not in the squared hewn block—in a Chapel built in 1185 on the Montesiepi near Sienna. The sword is the sword of St. Galgano, in the twelfth century a somewhat wild knight, who declined to believe in miracles, unless he could strike his sword deep into the living rock. He was therefore taken to the spot where his chapel now stands—some say by St. Michael—and told to thrust his sword into an outcrop of stone.

¹ *Morte d' Arthur*, Bk 1, cp. v

Lo and behold! the blade entered deep, whereupon Galgano presumably fell upon his knees, confessed the error of his ways and became a hermit. Galgano died in 1181 at the age of thirty, and in 1185 a chapel was built upon the spot and later a Cistercian monastery.¹

It must not be imagined that the belief in magic arms and armour, swords that rendered the wielder unconquerable, harnesses that preserved the wearer invulnerable, died with the coming of Ragnarock, the Twilight of the Gods, and the northward spread of Christianity. Swords, graven with cabalistic charms, were numerous throughout the early Middle Ages and the practice would only seem to have fallen into desuetude in the first half of the fourteenth century. But the belief in their potency as talismans and amulets, and their virtue as revealers of the future persisted until a very late date. Johann Hartlieb, physician in ordinary to Albrecht, Duke of Bavaria, in his *Book of all Forbidden Arts* written in 1456 for Johan, Markgraf of Brandenburg, refers in that part of it which deals with Pyromancia (Fiur-sehen), to the use of "beautiful brightly polished sword blades" as mirrors wherein the scryer might see the event of wars and battles,—

"Beware, O Christian, I warn thee right truly. The same thing they do in a beautiful bright polished sword, the masters thinking that some one may haply ask about wars and such deadly matters; then, if the sword be one that hath killed many men, the spirits shall come all the sooner and quicker."²

And he adds—"I know a great prince: whoso bringeth him an old worn-out sword [*hahe swert*—and therefore one that had drunk much blood] hath done him much honour." And John Gaule, in his *Mag-astro-mancer*, published in 1652, refers to the pseudo-science of divination by swords and

¹ *The Times*, Feb 1, 1933 (p 6), Feb 4th (p 6), and Feb (p 8).

² Chapter 88—Grimm *Teutonic Mythology*, vol iv, p. 1774, Dora Ulm-Johann Hartliebs *Buch aller verbotenen Kunst*, 1914, pp. 53 and 54. When used for divination in matters of pleasure and peace or to assist in the search for treasure the sword had to be clean and a maiden (*unvermaigt*), that is un-fleshed (Hartlieb *loc cit*). The belief that swords that have taken many lives become endowed with an infernal life of their own and that without human aid they will continue to take more lives is a well-known German myth (see Sharpe's *Life of Henry*). To the same cause may be traced the belief that the sword of an executioner will leap from its scabbard in the presence of one whom it is later fated to "shorten," a superstition used effectively by Sir Walter Scott in *Anne of Gierstein*.

knives under the title of *macharomancy*¹ a word, by the way, unknown to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

A still later instance of this belief is furnished by the author of *Letters from Scotland*, who relates that Simon Frazer, Lord Lovat, beheaded on Tower Hill in 1747, boasted that at his birth all the swords in the house where that event took place leaped from their scabbards.² It was an unhappy omen for the old fox

There were others like Douglas' brand "forged by fairy lore", in *The Lady of the Lake*,—

"Did, self-unsabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe"
(Canto II, xv)³

It would not be difficult to quote many more instances of the persistence of the belief in the talismanic quality of certain weapons than we have space for. A few, a very few, must suffice to shew how widespread was this superstition and how exalted both intellectually and in a worldly sense were many of those who indulged in it.

When in the last years of his life that stout old Pontiff Julius II, Giuliano delle Rovere, was waging fierce war against the Christian enemies of the Church, he led the Papal armies and his Turkish battalia in the field girt with the Sword of St. Paul, the veritable instrument—and none should have known the truth of the matter better than the founder of the Vatican Museum—wherewith the Apostle was decollated during the Neronian persecution. And the successful outcome of the campaign fully justified Julius' belief in the potency of this talisman. Looking, however, at the chronicle with the unprejudiced eyes of the historian, it is difficult to imagine the event being other than it was with such a warrior to lead the armies of the Church. Julius was no weakling, but a man as stout as any of his captains. When he

¹ Πύρομαρτια *The Mag-astro-mancer* p 165

² Edward Burt *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland*, 1754, vol II, p 214.

³ Old Sir Walter was inordinately fond of these prophetic arms. Besides the two swords already mentioned (*Geierstein* and *The Lady of the Lake*) he introduces an armour of the same kind into *The Doom of Devorgoul* (Act II, scene II)

" . . . should Black Erick's armour fall,
Look for guests shall scare you all!
They shall come ere peep of day,—
Wake and watch, and hope and pray "

sat down before Mirandola in the winter of 1512 the snow stood up to the horses' bellies; yet though well past his eightieth year he was out in the camp and at the batteries at all hours; he ate and slept in the kitchen of a farm within reach of the enemy's guns, and two of his servants were killed by round-shot that swept the room while he himself slept. And, when the city fell at last, he would not wait for the gates to be opened to him, but must needs scramble up a scaling ladder into the breach that his cannon had battered and so into the captured town.¹

The Ranzaus of Breitenburg in Holstein have been peculiarly fortunate in their associations with the goblin-folk. It is related of the Countess Anna von Ranzau, generally referred to by her maiden name of Anna von Walstorf, wife of Count John von Ranzau, the Danish general (1492-1565), that upon one occasion she played midwife to the queen of the goblins, in return for which service she was rewarded with a gift of gold, in bars or shavings according to various versions of the legend, which at the suggestion of the donor she had made up into certain objects—fifty counters, a herring, a distaff or spindle, and some say a goblet.² At the same time she was warned that only so long as they were preserved would the family pass from honour to honour, increasing in power and wealth; should they be lost, the branch to which the lost object belonged would die out. She was to have three children from whom would spring the three branches of the family. That to which the herring passed would be successful in war; those who had the counters would become high officers of state; those who had the spindle would have numerous offspring.³

The spindle and the fifty golden counters with inscriptions filled in with black enamel are still preserved in a silver box bearing the arms of Count John von Ranzau and his

¹ Collin de Plancy, *Dictionnaire*, vol. II, p. 397, Pastor, *Lives of the Popes*, vol. VI, pp. 341, 342.

² The story was seemingly first published by Johann Praetorius *Anthropodæmus Plutonicus*, edit. 1666, Bk. II, p. 114.

The von Hahns of Neuhaus of one of whose ancestresses a similar tradition is related still keep a beaker made of the gold presented to her for her services. The other objects made of the goblin gold have been lost (Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, vol. III, p. 51 n).

³ Thorpe *Northern Mythology*, vol. III, p. 50 *et seq.* The story was afterwards related of the wife of Henry von Ranzau (1526-1598), son of John von Ranzau and Anna von Walstorf.

wife Anna, at Breitenburg. The beaker is said to be still at Rastorf. The herring is at the bottom of the Rhine somewhere near Strasburg.

The talismanic herring came finally into the hands of Josias von Ranzau (1609-1650), who, following the prognostication of the original donor, achieved very considerable fame as a soldier. As a young man he held in turn commissions in the Dutch, the Swedish, the Imperial and the French services ultimately rising in 1635 to the rank of Marshal of France. His prowess in the field was, however, excelled by his success in the duel, and his phenomenal good fortune was attributed to the circumstance that he had had the talismanic fish converted by a skilful workman into a sword hilt,¹ which he used whenever he succeeded in forcing a quarrel upon some unfortunate and less well armed opponent. On one occasion he even picked a quarrel with an intimate friend for the puerile reason that the latter, in an age when none could spell, had written his name incorrectly. Such a secret could not, however, be kept for ever, and the secret leaked out at Strasburg, the blabber being a certain Caspar von Bockwold, a nobleman of Holstein. Thereupon Ranzau, enraged at the suggestion that he took an unfair advantage of his enemies, flung his talismanic weapon into the Rhine.

The loss of his sword does not seem to have curbed the enthusiasm of this fire-eater and his victorious career continued but with this difference: until then he had come through his numerous battles and personal encounters unscathed, but from that time forward he was wounded again and again. He lost an eye at the siege of Dôle, a leg and a hand at the siege of Arras and an ear in another engagement—in fine one of every member of which a normally endowed man possesses two. When he died on September 4th, 1650, of dropsy contracted in the Bastille, whither he had been sent by Mazarin for some suspected treason, his body bore the scars of sixty severe wounds. His tomb in the Church of the Minimes de Chaillot bore the lines—

“Du corps du grand Rantzau tu n'as qu'une des parts:
L'autre moitié resta dans les plaines de Mars.

¹ J. M. Thiele (*Danmarks Folkesagn*, 1843-60, vol. 1, p. 134) relates that according to an oral tradition one of the objects given to Anna von Ranzau was a golden “sabre” which was said still to be at Breitenburg when he wrote

Il dispersa partout ses membres et sa gloire.
 Tout abattu qu'il fût, il demeura vainqueur,
 Son sang fut en cent lieux le prix de la victoire,
 Et Mars ne lui laissa rien d'entier que le cœur."

Marshal Josias was not the only distinguished soldier of his day to possess a charmed sword. After Roland's death at Roncevalles his great sword, Durandal, was taken to the Church of Our Lady of Rocamadour, in Quercy, and thrust into the wall, so biting was its temper, to stay there as a memorial of the Paladin for all time. But during the wars of the Ligue it was removed by its priestly custodians and presented to the Prince de Condé. For it was substituted what Collin de Plancy describes as "une lourde masse de fer," which does, however, bear a reasonably close resemblance to the characteristic brazil-nut pommel sword of the eleventh century: proof at least of the very considerable antiquity of the original weapon.¹

There is scarcely a royal treasury or regalia in Europe to-day that does not or has not in the past included the brand of some saint or mythical hero, treasured if not as the supreme palladium of the country, at least as an important item in the national arsenal against ill fortune. Athelstan possessed the sword of Constantine the Great, which Hugh the White, Count of Paris, had sent to him as a most precious gift when he wooed one of that English King's sisters. John had among his regalia the Sword of Tristram, and even the present Royal emblems include a Curtana, so named in memory of the merciful sword of the Confessor. In the Treasury at Prague is the so-called sword, together with the shirt of mail, of St. Wenceslaus. But those items of the military panoply of the long dead royal Saints to which this character of a talisman has been most closely attached are those at one time associated with the Norwegian saint and king, Olaf

In the early Middle Ages the Lance of the Saint, or what purported to be this relic, was a precious possession of the Crown of Denmark, and was always taken into battle by her King, especially when waging war upon the heathen of the Baltic shores.² And in the early sixteenth century

¹ Collin de Plancy *Dictionnaire des Reliques*, vol iii, p 44, Louis de Veyrières "L'épée de Roland à Roc-Amadour"—*Bulletin Soc. des lettres, sciences et arts de la Corrèze*, vol xiii (1891) pp. 97-102, vol xiv (1892) pp. 139-143.

² Jens Dolmer *Jus aulicum antiquum Norvagicum*, p. 413

three of the most treasured objects of the Trondhjem Cathedral were the Saintly King's headpiece and spurs. When, however, the country was invaded by Eric XIV. in the middle of the century and the Cathedral pillaged, these were carried off by him in triumph to mark the completeness of his victory and deposited by him in the Church of St. Nicholas, at Stockholm. They were there at the close of the seventeenth century and were engraved for Dahlberg's monumental *Suecia antiqua et hodierna*.¹ In fairly recent times they were transferred to the Kongliga-Livrust-kammaren in the Statens Historiska Museum. The only unfortunate feature about this pleasantly romantic incident is that neither the spurs nor the headpiece can ever have belonged to the Saint whose name they bear, for the casque is a German sallet of the third quarter of the fifteenth century and the spurs are *long spurs* of the same date.

Kingdoms were not alone the fortunate possessors of these potent "relics" of militant heroes. Many private families owned and still own such mementoes of their distinguished ancestors. Elsewhere I have written of the so-called sword of Almaric Tristram of St. Laurence, the progenitor of the Earls of Howth. At Warwick Castle is the sword of the redoubtable Guy of Warwick, a fine late fourteenth century weapon that in all probability actually belonged to Thomas de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who died in 1369.²

Another weapon for which an equally exalted claim is made is the sword of Richard de Clare, Earl of Striguil, surnamed Strongbow, and by his marriage with Eva, daughter of Diarmait Macmorrough, titular King of Leinster. This weapon now belongs to the Marquess of Ely and is preserved at Loftus Hall, county Wexford.³ Here again the claim to its great antiquity unfortunately cannot be substantiated since it is actually a Highland claymore, or two-hand sword, of about 1540. Of late years, I believe, it has only been called upon as a talisman on the occasions of weddings in the family when it has been used to cut the bridal cake!

In the foregoing examples any palladic character enjoyed by the weapons cited was due to the supernormal nature

¹ Eric Dahlberg *Suecia antiqua et hodierna* 1716, vol. 1, pl. 28.

² William Dugdale *Warwickshire*, fol. 765a.

³ John Gough *Monumenta Sepulchralia*, vol. i, pl. ix, 4.

with which as relics or pseudo-relics they had been endowed. Others, those which were the outward and visible signs of the tenure by which their owners possessed and enjoyed lands or titles were by this circumstance family lucks, if not in name, at least in fact. For in early times their ownership of these benefits was entirely dependent upon the retention of these ensigns. And as I have shewn elsewhere, upon the loss or destruction of such fatal objects their owners did not scruple to make fresh ones or to convert old objects of the same nature to this purpose.

Swords that have played the part of ensigns of tenure are not uncommon, at least in documents. Such doubtless was the "ancient and rusty sword" with which John, Earl of Warenne, made play in 1279 when the King's justices asked him by what warranty he held his franchises.

And the ancient Earls of Chester held their lands also by the sword, and all indictments for felony, murder, and other heinous offences in that county included the charge that they had been done *contra pacem domini comitis gladium et dignitates suas*.¹ Late in the fifteenth century, when the ancient sword of Hugh Lupus had vanished, a new sword, one of late fifteenth century north Italian origin, was substituted and the name of Chester's hero cut upon the blade. This weapon, lacking its guard, is now in the British Museum

One of these early tenure weapons has, however, survived. The falchion of the manor of Sockburn—the luck of the Conyers—which is at least as early as the close of the thirteenth century is preserved in the Cathedral Treasury at Durham. With it the family of Conyers held the manor of Sockburn, and it was their duty to present this weapon to the Bishop of Durham on the occasion of his installation, his Grace immediately returning it. Round this ceremony, logical and easily understood, fabulous elements soon collected, and tradition asserted that it was with this weapon that Sir John de Conyers slew the Worm of Sockburn, one of the many monsters with which, according to legend, the borders were at one time infested. And the tomb of the hero was carved with representations of the sword and the Worm.²

¹ Blount *Law Dictionary*, tit *Pleas of the Sword*.

² Camden's *Britannia*, vol II, p. 132.

The Pollard's lands at Bishop-Auckland, in the county of Durham, were similarly held of the bishop by a falchion. In 1399 Dionisia, widow of John Pollard the elder, died seized "de una pec. terrae, voc. Hekes, juxta Parca de Aukland, quae tenetur de domino episcopo in capite, per servitium ostend. domino episcopo unum fawchon, in primo adventu suo apud Aukland post consecrac. suam."¹ Blount, in a brief account of the presentation of the sword to Bishop Egerton in September, 1771, gives the words of the formal offering as recited by Dr. Johnson, of Newcastle, one of the tenants. "My lord! in behalf of myself, as well as of the several other tenants of Pollard's Land, I do humbly present your lordship with this falchion, at your first coming here, wherewith, as tradition goeth, Pollard slew of old a great and venomous serpent, which did much harm to man and beast."²

Dr. Longley, created Bishop of Durham in 1856, was the last to receive the falchion. The present whereabouts of this weapon is unknown to me.

Dr. Johnson was in error when he stated that the monstrous persecutor of the people of Auckland was a serpent. The creature was actually—that is so far as anything legendary can be actual—a boar or brawn, one no doubt of the same litter as the beast that had its lair upon Brandon Hill and gave its name to Brancepeth.

The lands of Plompton, in Warwickshire, were held by another weapon, a Danish axe. Dugdale says,³ "In King Henry the Third's time, Walter de Plompton held certain lands in Plompton, in the parish of Kingsbury and the county of Warwick, by a certain weapon, called a Danish axe, which being the very charter whereby the said land

¹ Inquisition post mortem quoted in Blount's *Fragmenta Antiquitatis*, edit 1815, p. 347.

² Those who are interested in the matter may find the legend recounted in full in W. Andrews' *Bygone Durham*, and in Florence N. Cockburn's chapter on Durham legends in *Memorials of Old Durham* (edit. Henry T. Leighton), where the tradition, as recounted by Andrews, is reprinted almost word for word but without acknowledgement.

Hutchinson (*History of Durham*) quotes a letter signed "R. Bowser" which commences—"Sir, inclosed you have the speech my brother Pewterer gave me out of Lord Bishop Cosin's old Book." The speech describes the monster not as a boar but as "a venomous serpent." John Cosin was Bishop of Durham from 1660 to 1672, so the serpent tradition is a fairly old one.

³ Dugdale *Warwickshire*, fol. 765a.

was given to one of his ancestors, hung up for a long time in the hall of the capital messuage, in testimony of the said tenure," a circumstance forcefully reminiscent of the Lady's Purse of Tullicallan.

The amuletic or protective quality of armour, as opposed to the talismanic or active quality of swords, is less in evidence. Tutelary properties were, however, ascribed to armour, but only by association with some emblem of the god.

The boar was sacred to Freya, and its image placed as a crest upon the helm was considered as an amulet in war and a defence to the wearer's life.

" . . . the white Helm . . .
 'Twas marvellous Work of Days of Yore,
 Set with the Image of the Boar,
 That neither Brand nor warlike Knife
 Might bite to hurt the Hero's Life,"
 (Beowulf, Canto **xxi**.)

And even the legal processes of the later Middle Ages concede the existence of infallible talismans. Previous to every judicial combat in the *champ clos* both champions were required to swear that neither of them had concealed about his person any amulet or charm or other device whereby he might make himself invulnerable or secure an unfair advantage over his enemy. Even in the more or less amicable combats of the tilt-yard each contestant was compelled to subscribe to that article of almost every challenge that he would not make use of in his armour "any fraude, deceyt or malengine," and only employ the normal advantages called for by the courses to be run.

It may be presumed that subscription to these conditions, which continued to be demanded as an important part of the preliminaries to any combat until a quite late date, prevented any very extensive use of charms in contests serious or sportive, that took place under the eyes of established authority. But adventitious aids of one kind and another were frequently resorted to in the field whether the enemy were Christian or Paynim.

Armour students are well aware of the frequency with which the two talismanic texts *OS NON COMINUETIS EX EO* and *JESUS AUTEM TRANSIENS PER MEDIUM ILLORUM IBAT* occur upon the backs and

breasts of Northern Italian armours of the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The same purpose underlay the decorative use of the figures of one group of saints upon these armours. The use of the figure of Our Lady in association with the prayer O MATER DEI MEMENTO MEI needs no explanation, nor does the appearance of St. George. St. Sebastian, also a Roman officer and, according to one tradition, a native of Milan, though more generally said to have been born at Narbonne, was also seemingly held to be a most potent protector, the belief no doubt being founded upon the circumstance that though Diocletian's archers "shot at him till he was as full of arrows as an urchin is full of pricks," he yet survived, only to be stoned to death. St. Christopher was thought no less potent, but in that his protective power was granted to all those who looked upon his presentment, his protection would seem to have belonged as much to the attacker as to the wearer of the armour upon which his figure appeared. St. Barbara's inclusion is understandable when it is remembered that she was the patroness of all armourers, while St. Catherine of Alexandria was held to be one of the fourteen most powerful saints in the Calendar.

The sentiments of the average knight on facing an opponent so protected must have been very much those of King Padella when he met Prince Giglio in the great battle upon the borders of Crim Tartary—"If you ride a fairy horse and wear a fairy armour, what on earth is the use of my hitting you? I may as well give myself up a prisoner at once." Giglio's armour besides being embroidered all over with jewels and blinding to the eyes was, as readers will remember, "water-proof, gun-proof, and sword-proof."

So potent were these charms indeed thought to be that when an armour proved to be of such high quality that no buffets served to hurt its wearer, the populace immediately assumed something supernatural in its manufacture. When the Italian knight Giovanni Bonnifacio fought with Jacques de Lalaing at the Pas de la Fontaine de Pleurs at Châlons sur Saone in 1446¹ he was armed in very light field armour. At the fourth course de Lalaing "fauça le harnois [of his

¹ Olivier de la Marche: *Memoires*, Bk 1, cp xxx—edited by Henri Beaune and J. D'Arbaumont for the Soc. de l'Hist. de France, 1883, vol. II, pp. 159-160.

opponent] à jour, et, se l'arrest de la lance ne fust rompu de celle atteinte, le fert fust entre au corps du chevalier." Nevertheless—and here it is impossible not to feel that Jacques was employing rather unsporting tactics—"Messire Jaques continua de querir et d'atteindre de cousté, au lieu ou il avoit desjà empiré le harnois du chevalier; et disoit on que ledit de Bonniface avoit trempé son harnois d'une eau qui le tenoit si bon, que fert ne pavoit prendre sus; et, à la verité, il couroit en ung legier harnois de guerre, et n'estoit pas possible, sans artifice ou ayde, que le harnois eust peu soustenir les atteintes que fist dessus messire Jaques."

Apart from the evidence which this incident affords as to the beliefs current at the time, it offers remarkable testimony as to the quality of the Milanese armours of the period. The only magic that had been employed in the building of Bonnifacio's harness was the supreme craft of the smiths who had made it.

From the foregoing it is evident that in the Middle Ages the eternal problem of penetration of projectiles against weight of armour must have been more complicated than it is to-day. One can imagine some ambitious young squire flooring some forgotten Merlin, not with the ancient conundrum which relates to the results of an irresistible force meeting an immovable body, but with—If I possess a talismanic sword that no plate can withstand, and my enemy possess a charmed armour that no weapon can break, what will happen?

One can see thus Merlin begging his particular Vivian upon his knees to bury him alive.

Henry Howard, Lord Northampton, in *A defensatue against the poyson of supposed Prophecies*, published in 1583, says that,

"One of the Reysters (reisters) which served under the Frenche admirall at the siege of Poicters, was founde, after he was dead, to have about his necke a purse of taffeta, and within the same a piece of parchment full of characters in Hebrew; beside many cycles, semicircles, tryangles, &c., with sundrie shorte cuttes and shreddings of the psalmes. Deus misereatur nostri, &c., Angelis suis mandavit de te &c., Super Aspidem et Basiliscum, &c., as if the prophecies which properly belong to Christe, might be wrested to the safe guard and defence of every private man."¹

¹ The death in Chichester gaol in February, 1749, of a certain William

Very few of such battle talismans have survived to the present day. One such is, however, preserved at Taymouth,¹ but during the last few centuries it has been degraded from its one-time high estate—that of the amulet of the laird of Glenorchy—and it is now used like the Clach na Bratich and the Lee Penny solely for medicinal purposes.

This talisman is "ane stone of the quantitie of half a hen's eg sett in silver, being flatt at the ane end and round at the other end lyke a peir." The octagonal silver mounting is of the fifteenth century and inset with eight pearls. It was once owned and carried by Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy (c 1410-1480). According to Master William Bowie, the family historian and author of the famous *Black Book of Taymouth*, the greater part of which he wrote in 1598, "the said Sir Colene throch his valiant actes and manheid was maid Knicht in the Isle of Rhodos (quhilk standeth in the Carpathiane Sea neir to Caria ane countrie of Asia the les) and was thre sundrie tymes in Rome." It was from the latter circumstance that he obtained his byname of *Colin dubh na Roimh*, Black Colin of Rome. And according to an inventory of *heirship moveables* belonging to the family, drawn up in 1640, in which this stone appears, it was during the Turkish wars that Sir Colin made use of this charm—"quhilk Sir Coline Campbell, first Laird of Glenvrquhy worr quhen he faught in battell at the Rhodes agaynst the Turks, he being one of the Knychtis of Rhodes."²

Jackson, a murderer and smuggler, affords an interesting instance of the late use of such charms by those who followed dangerous occupations. On being measured for his "irons" he was so struck with horror that he collapsed and died. On his body was found a linen purse within which was a paper inscribed,

"Sancti tres Reges
Gaspar, Melchior, Balthasar
Orate pro nobis nunc et in hora
Mortis nostrae"

"Ces billets ont touche [sic] aux trois testes de SS Roys à Cologne Ils sont pour les voyageurs, contre les mal-heurs de chemins, maux de teste, mal-caducque, sievres, sorcellerie, toute sorte de malefice, mort subite"

(*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol xix (1749), pp 42 and 88)

¹ Joseph Paton *Scottish National Memorials*, 1890, p 337

² According to Cosmo Innes the stone now at Taymouth has not "remained continuously in the family custody." (Innes *The Black Book of Taymouth*, pp 11, 13 and 346-347)

CHAPTER XVI

WAIFS AND STRAYS

THE explorer of the highways and byways of folk-lore in search of family talismans will in the course of his wanderings, find some, though not many, that fall into no recognized group of such survivals—talismans whose origin can be traced to no known custom of the past, whose only parallel is to be discovered in the realm of mythology.

One such is the so-called Lady's Purse, once the luck of the Blackadders, of Tullieallan Castle, in Fife. The Purse is actually a bronze chaldron, and in days gone by it used to hang from the roof of the great hall of the Castle. Attached to it was the curse that when it fell to the floor of the hall the fortunes of the house of Blackadder would fall with it. And the curse has been fulfilled. The chaldron *has* fallen. The Castle of Tullieallan lies in ruins; the Blackadders are no more!

Sir Daniel Wilson gives the best and most concise account of this strange luck.¹

"In the great hall of Tullyallan Castle, near Kincardine, there formerly hung suspended from one of the bosses of its richly sculptured roof an ancient bronze kettle of the most usual form, which bore the name of *The Lady's Purse*. It was traditionally reported to be filled with gold; and the old family legend bore, that so long as it hung there the Castle would stand and the Tullyallan family would flourish. Whether the Blackadders of Tullyallan ever had recourse to the treasures of *The Lady's Purse* in their need can no longer be known, for the castle roof has fallen

¹ Daniel Wilson: *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, vol. II, p. 500. In 1798 the property was purchased by Admiral Sir George Keith-Elphinstone, K.B. (1747-1823) created Viscount Keith in 1814. Between 1818 and 1820 he built the present castle of Tullieallan.

and the old race who owned it is extinct. The ancient caldron, however, on the safety of which the fate of the owners was believed to hang, is preserved. It was dug out of the ruins by a neighbouring tenant, and is still regarded with the veneration due to the fatal memorial of an extinct race. It measures $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter by $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height as it stands, and is simply what would be called by antiquaries a Roman camp-kettle, and by old Scottish dames a brass kail-pot!"

How the chaldron of Tullieallan came to be regarded as the talisman of the Blackadders, and why it should have been hung up as it was, affords a very pleasing little problem to which there are at least three solutions all equally satisfactory. Strong rooms and safes being unknown in the Middle Ages, all sorts of quaint stratagems were resorted to in order that such sums of money, as every great householder was compelled to keep by him for emergencies, were not only secure but also readily accessible. And the chaldron may well have been used as a safe-deposit, the curse being deliberately attached to it to prevent pilfering by members of the household

Again it may have been some relic of a forgotten ancestor of the house of Blackadder. This is possible even if not particularly likely. For "Guy of Warwick's Cooking Pot," though apparently not regarded as a talisman by recent holders of the title of Earl of Warwick, is certainly a very treasured possession of his family as a pseudo-relic of their semi-legendary forbear

Thirdly and lastly—and herein folk-lorists will surely see its origin—the chaldron of Tullieallan possesses very obvious affinities with the many chaldrons known to Keltic mythology. Possibly the most celebrated of these is the Chaldron of Tynog, one of the "Thirteen Rarities of Kingly Regalia of the Island of Britain," which were said to have been kept at Caerleon upon Usk, and were later removed by Myrddin, the son of Morvran, to the House of Glass, in Enlli, or Bardsey Island. Another legend asserts that they were kept by Taliesin, the Chief of the Bards.¹

Scarcely less famous is the Chaldron of Dagda, one of the talismans of the Tuatha de Danaan, which according

¹ Ed. Jones *Relics of the Welsh Bards*, 1784, vol. II, p. 47.

to legend is buried beneath the Hill of Tara. Less well known are the chaldron of the Feinne, the kettle of the Korrigan of Brittany, and the chaldron of Bendigeid Vran, that had once belonged to Llaesar Llaesgyvnewid "who escaped from the Iron House in Ireland." It appears in the tale of *Branwen the daughter of Llyr* in the *Mabinogion*, and was endowed with the rejuvenating property common to the Chaldron of Dagda and the pot wherein the mediaeval sorcerer Virgil accidentally met his death.

Unfortunately there is apparently no early printed or manuscript version of the tradition relating to the Lady's Purse, and it is quite impossible to make even a guess at its age. It may well be one of very considerable antiquity. It is just as probable on the other hand that it is, like many kindred traditions, of the late seventeenth century.

John Aubrey relates that the "extraordinary great kettle or caldron" still preserved in Frensham Church, not far from Farnham, in Surrey, was according to local tradition "brought hither by the fairies, time out of mind, from Borough-hill, about a mile hence."¹ Another equally late tradition, referred to by Nathaniel Solomon in his *Antiquities of Surrey* published in 1736, was that it came from Waverley Abbey.² A third but one of a more recent date happily combines the two legends but replaces Borough Hill by Mother Ludlam's Hole, a cave at the foot of a wooded sandstone hill near the southern end of Moor Park and overlooking the Wey, about three miles from Farnham and a quarter of a mile to the north-east of Waverley Abbey. It was from St. Mary's Well within the cave that the Abbey obtained its water. Of Mother Ludlam or Ludlow, the eponymous occupant of this cavern, little is recorded other than that she was a witch and lived "a very long time ago." Unlike most of her kind, she was of a generous disposition, and her poor neighbours had only to come to her and ask for the loan of anything from a frying pan to a yoke of oxen to find the desired object waiting for them at their door upon their return home. The only condition required of them was that whatever they borrowed must be returned within two days. One borrower, however, took more than the regulation time to restore a great copper kettle,

¹ John Aubrey *Natural History of Surrey*, vol. III, p. 366

² Nathaniel Solomon *Antiquities of Surrey*, 1736.

and when he returned it the old lady not only refused to accept it but vanished from the locality. The kettle remained in the cave until it was taken to Frensham Church.¹ The same legend, in Aubrey's day, was also attached to the Borough Hill.

The legend is probably an etiological one, based on the name of Kettlebury Hill, in Elsted, about two and a half miles from Frensham. Aubrey's topography is often not too reliable, and his assertion that Borough Hill is in the tithing of Churt need not be taken too seriously.²

Neither Aubrey nor Solomon accepted these legends. While the former asserts that the Frensham kettle was used at church-ales and parish feasts, Solomon says, "It need not raise any man's wonder for what use it was, there having been many in England till very lately to be seen,³ as well as very large Spits which were given for entertainment of the Parish, at the Wedding of poor Maids."

This somewhat lengthy account of an object that strictly speaking has nothing to do with the present subject has been allowed to intrude itself, since it at least demonstrates the existence of legends associating chaldrons with fairy donors at the close of the seventeenth century, a period when I am convinced great numbers of these ancient legends were resurrected and attached to objects, the origin of which had long been forgotten.

Sir Walter Scott, though not always accurate, was generally very lavish with his footnotes. His poems, especially, are well garnished with a generous allowance of historical or archaeological snippings. It is the more surprising therefore to find no trace among the notes to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* of the poet's authority for the great talisman of the Lairds of Branksome, the Book of Might of Michael Scott, that reposed, under the watchful eye of the Monk of St. Mary's aisle, within the wizard's grave at Melrose, and was only brought forth when the dire need of the family demanded it

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;

¹ *Bygone Surrey*, edited by George Clinch and S. W. Kershaw, 1895,—
"Folklore," by George Clinch, pp. 105-109

² *Victoria County History—Surrey*, vol. II, p. 613

³ A fine example dated 1500 is to be seen at Lacock Abbey, in Wiltshire.

And never tell where it was hid,
 Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
 And when the need was past and o'er,
 Again the volume to restore.
 I buried him on St. Michael's night,
 When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright.
 And I dug his chamber among the dead,
 When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
 That his patron's cross might over him wave,
 And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave."
 (Canto II, xv.)

Not that one expects to hear that the tale is true of the Scotts of Branksome, nor to meet with an exact parallel in the annals of any other family. But it is certainly strange that Scott makes no mention of the source whence his romantic conception sprang.¹ I can think of no talisman that might have been changed by Sir Walter's own magic into "the Mighty Book, with iron clasp'd and with iron bound", that Sir William of Deloraine took from Melrose. Indeed one family only to my knowledge owns a book that can by any stretch of imagination and by a somewhat wide interpretation of the word talisman be described as such.

The Bible of Jardine Hall, near Lockerbie, in Dumfriesshire is a copy of Holy Writ, printed by Robert Baker, London, in 1634, now kept in a brass-bound box made from some of the beams of Spedlin's Tower, the ancient seat of the Jardines on the western bank of the Annan. By the aid of this Mighty Book the ghost of Porteus, the miller of Annan, the demon that haunted the Jardines was laid, or at all events confined to the dungeon of Spedlin's Tower, and upon its presence within the Tower depended the miller's more or less quiescence and its peaceful occupation by the family.

In the reign of King Charles II. Spedlin's Tower was the property, and at times the residence, of Sir Alexander Jardine of Applegarth, a gentleman no better and no worse than his neighbours, and one who had a high if not exaggerated opinion of his rights as a landed proprietor. Porteus, the unhappy victim of the Baronet's despotism,

¹ It is barely possible that Scott had in mind the Cathach of St Columba, the talisman of the O'Donnells, though I know of no evidence that he had ever heard of the Saint's Psalter.

had got into trouble with his overlord over some small matter of incendiarism—he was said to have burned down his own mill—and he was locked up in the strong room of the Tower. Thereafter the Baronet departed for Edinburgh entirely forgetful of his prisoner and of the circumstance that he had taken with him the keys of his prison.

Porteus died of thirst and hunger before the keys, sent back by a swift messenger from the capital, reached the Tower, and thereafter the building was haunted by his shrieking spirit. Indeed so pestilential did the haunting become that the Baronet was at length constrained to obtain the services of a number of ministers of religion to lay the unquiet miller. Unable to dismiss the spirit to that bourne whence there is no return, they managed, however, with the help of the Bible to confine it to the dungeon, and there it continued to cry through the years, "Let me oot! Let me oot! I'm deen' o' hunger!" And when the temerarious boys of the village thrust twigs through the keyhole they were found on being withdrawn to have been stripped of their bark by the ravenous ghost!¹

About 1770 the Jardines migrated to their new house across the Annan, but the Bible was left behind to keep the spirit within bounds. Later the potent charm was sent to Edinburgh to be rebound, and the disembodied Porteous at once seized the opportunity to persecute the descendants of the man who had murdered him. He even followed them to Jardine Hall most improperly crossing the running water of the Annan to do so. The Bible was promptly brought back and the ghost again confined within reasonable bounds. The Bible was, however, for the future kept at Jardine Hall, as this seems to have been found sufficient protection from the unwanted attentions of the ghost. Jardine Hall was sold by the family in 1884, but, as I have said, the Bible is still carefully preserved in the house.

An even more curious luck is preserved at Hintlesham Hall, near Ipswich, the seat of Sir Gerald Ryan, Bart. The Hall is a fine Elizabethan mansion that in the middle of the eighteenth century was altered to suit the taste of the period by elaborate rebuilding and facings of stone. In

¹ Told to Francis Grose by "an honest woman" in 1789—Grose. *The Antiquities of Scotland*, 1789-91, vol. 1, p. 144.

the seventeenth century it belonged to the Timperleys, and it was Henry Timperley, in the days of good Queen Anne, who successfully dissipated the family fortunes in the "flash kens," gambling hells, bagnios and other places of entertainment then frequented by gentlemen of fashion and loose morals. Reduced to beggary he parted with the Hall in 1721 to Richard Powys, one of the Principal Clerks to the Treasury. The latter's son, a second Richard, sold Hintlesham in 1747 to Sir Richard Lloyd whose son and grandson, both named Richard Savage Lloyd, in turn held the property during the remainder of the century. It was the sister of the second Richard Savage who devised it to her distant cousin, James Hamilton Lloyd Anstruther, from whose descendant, Colonel Lloyd Anstruther, it was purchased by Sir Gerald.

Like the best of such houses, Hintlesham Hall is haunted. The ghost is that of the second wife of one of the Richard Savage Lloyds who, jealous of her stepson, starved the unhappy boy to death. Her ghost "walks" on the great staircase, and in the library at the foot of the staircase in the south wing of the house.

I have not met this virago in her midnight perambulations, but I shall never forget the shock of seeing the library door open at about one o'clock one morning when I was working in the museum beyond the library. I was standing in the narrow passage which connects the two rooms, at work upon part of the Redfern collection, and had a clear view of the library door. Everyone else in the house was asleep—presumably—and Sir Gerald and Lady Ryan were in London. Without warning the library door swung wide open slowly and steadily as though propelled by an invisible but purposeful hand, and then as slowly and steadily shut. An instant later I was back in the well-lighted museum and there I remained until, having summoned up sufficient courage, I made a hurried dash through the library and along the passage in the front of the house to the north wing where my bedroom was situated.

The Luck of Hintlesham is a large doll figure said to have been modelled from the features of the unhappy boy—presumably a funeral effigy—which is kept locked in the attic of the Hall. At one time it was preserved behind a curtain on the staircase. Attached to it is the belief that

if ever the figure is broken or harmed or removed the house will pass from the family and disaster will follow. I believe it was so removed at one time, and the house was sold by Colonel Lloyd Anstruther. Certain it is that at a comparatively recent time after the doll had been disturbed the back wall of the Great Hall collapsed and fell outwards into the garden.¹

It seems impossible to find a parallel in mythology for the Luck of Hintlesham. But the wax figure of the murdered child is closely akin to the skull of Anne Griffith, at Burton Agnes Hall. The only difference lies in the circumstance that, while it is believed that so long as the doll remains undisturbed at Hintlesham the family in residence will thrive and that disaster will only come on its removal, the skulls do nothing actively to justify their preservation, but become vengefully malignant upon their removal. Pandemonium nightly breaks out if they are taken away, and rest for the inhabitants becomes impossible.

According to Llewellynn Jewitt, one of the physical essentials of a luck should be its frangibility. And this characteristic is certainly possessed by the Luck of Cefn Mably, a seat some six miles to the north-east of Cardiff, which, when Hartshorne wrote of the Luck, was in the possession of Mr. Kemeys-Tynte. The Luck is only unusual in that it is a typical "yard of ale" with a bulb at one end. It is apparently of early eighteenth century manufacture.² There is so far as I can discover no legend attached to this glass, and it is obviously one of the lucks manufactured in the eighteenth century.

An unusual luck is owned by the family of von Adler of Vienna. It is a flat glass dish about sixteen inches in diameter of sixteenth century Venetian make, the metal being of a slightly greenish tint. On it has been engraved with a diamond the history and marriages of the family for some two hundred years. This pedigree, if such it may be called, ends in the middle of the seventeenth century with the names of Hans Wolfram von Adler and his wife, who boasted of the somewhat unusual name of Nothburga,

¹ This story, without names or locality, is given by Mary L. Lewes in *Stranger than Fiction*, pp. 202-203. The author says the figure is that of a girl and that it was removed from the staircase for a dance.

² A. Hartshorne *Old English Glasses*, p. 339.

after the Tyrolese peasant Saint.¹ This relic is kept locked in a glass-topped velvet-lined case, and is less revered by its owner as a luck than as a piece of antique glass.

Another Luck of an unusual character is the Black Bed of the Otways, an enormous erection generally said to be made of ebony but more probably of bog-oak, with hangings and other fittings of black velvet. Why a bed should be regarded as a family talisman I do not know, though the conception may have originated in the supposed circumstance that all the Otways were born and died in it. But for some strange reason beds that have belonged to heroes of the past and great historic figures have from the earliest times been regarded with more than a little veneration. Reverting to remote antiquity, the bed of Og the King of Bashan, who was of the race of giants, was preserved long after his death as a curiosity—"behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man."² The fame of the Great Bed of Ware, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is known to all. But little less famous in Tudor and Stuart days were Richard Crookback's bed in Leicester, and King Henry VI.'s bed preserved with his spurs and his headache-curing cap of maintenance at Windsor. The innumerable beds in which Gloriana slept are still objects of pilgrimage, and there are not a few beds—and tables for that matter—in and on which Cromwell slept that are only a little less popular with sightseers.

Apart from the ancient custom of keeping all doors open during the dinner hour, observed until comparatively recent times by the St. Laurences of Howth, we have not referred to those "old and quaint ancestral customs" on the observation of which, according to the Rev. Theodore C. Wilks, the well-being of some if not many great families depends. When he wrote he had the Tichbourne Dole in mind; but it is very doubtful, if challenged, he could have produced at a moment's notice any other illustration. Such practices are by no means as common as his words would suggest.

Of its kind, as is the Luck of Edenhall of its own, the Tichbourne Dole is the outstanding example, though

¹ From private information.

² *Deuteronomy*, iii, 11

it has not attracted so much notice as the famous practice of the Lords of Glamis, when each succeeding heir has to undergo an ordeal in some secret chamber of the castle. The Tichbourne Dole involves no dungeon; there is about it no suggestion of concealed horror; no tale of a grim ancestor and an infernal companion to attract the fancy of the recounter of ancient scandals. Nevertheless the story of the Tichbourne Dole is dramatic enough to satisfy the most carping critic; and it possesses the advantages that it is fairly well documented, and has within recent time come very nigh to fruition.

The legend of the Tichborne Dole and the Crawls has been often told, and told in various ways with many variations, many additions and circumstantial details, for, like most tales of its kind, it has grown considerably in the telling.

In the days of Henry II the lord of Tichbourne was Sir Roger de Ticheburne. Family tradition tells us that he was a man of fierce and overbearing character, of the same kidney as that lord of Coventry who made his spouse ride naked through the streets of his city when she would have him lighten the burden of taxation upon the men of Coventry. And like Earl Leofric, Sir Roger was blessed with a wife much given to good works and charitable actions, generally, we must believe, carried out at the expense of her lord's pocket. She was Mabell (or Isabel), only daughter and heiress of Ralph de Lamerston of Lamerston, in the Isle of Wight. When she lay upon her death-bed, being minded to perform one last good deed—again at her husband's expense—she begged him to set aside so much land as should provide a dole of bread for the poor to be given yearly upon Lady Day. Sir Roger was unwilling to do this, but he had no wish to refuse his lady's last request. So he told her that he would set aside as much land as she could walk round while a brand then blazing on the hearth of her chamber continued to burn. Summoning her tire-woman the dying lady ordered them to dress her and carry her out of doors. Arrived at the fields, still known by the name of the Crawls, she started upon her perambulation. So feeble was she, however, that within a short while she was compelled to continue her journey upon all fours. And thus she crawled round

twenty-three acres of her lord's land before the burning billet went out

She was carried back to her room in a state of collapse, and there upon her bed she solemnly warned her husband that if either he or those who came after him dared to withhold her charity, ruin should fall upon the family, their name should be changed and in the end the race of Tichborne should die out. And warning of their impending doom should be given by the birth in one generation of seven sons and in the next of seven daughters. Thereafter for six hundred years the Dole continued. Yearly, fourteen hundred loaves, each weighing twenty-six ounces, were baked and distributed, and if there were not enough to go round, those who did not receive the charity had twopence given them. In the course of time, however, the Dole became a nuisance. The yearly distribution of charity became a fair. Butts and booths were set up. All the rogues, vagabonds and masterless men from the counties round gathered at Tichborne. There were robbings and worse. And in the middle of the eighteenth century the magistrates were forced to complain of the practice. Finally, in 1796, in response to numerous complaints, Sir Henry Tichborne, the seventh baronet, decided that the Dole should no longer be given.

Within a year or two Lady Mabell's curse began to work. In 1803, during some structural alterations to the old mansion, a large part of it collapsed. Sir Henry had in 1778 married Elizabeth Lucy Plowden, and of this marriage were born seven sons, three of whom inherited the title. His eldest son, the eighth baronet, was the father of seven daughters, and his third son, Edward, who in turn became the ninth baronet, succeeded in 1826. At a time when there was no likelihood of his obtaining the title or estates, he had succeeded to the property of Miss Doughty, of Snarford Hall, Lincolnshire, and changed his name to Doughty. The family is now Doughty-Tichborne.

With such presages of disaster it is scarcely surprising that the Dole was restored, though with modifications.

A somewhat similar custom, in origin an obvious serjeanty, is associated with Brotherton, in the county of York. Here once stood the Royal Manor of Brotherton, in which was born Thomas of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, son of

Edward I. The house itself has long since vanished, but near the church is a space some twenty acres in extent surrounded by a ditch and a stone wall, which the tenants are bound to keep in repair. If the wall falls they lose their lease.¹

That indefatigable collector of all that was quaint and curious in the way of legendary lore, John Aubrey, notes in his *Miscellanyes*² that—"Tis commonly reported, that before an heir of the Cliftons, of Clifton [Hall] in Nottinghamshire, dies, a sturgeon is taken in the river Trent by that place." Aubrey is vague and writes from hearsay only. But his statement does not lead us to suppose that there was anything of the supernormal or supernatural in these fish. And we are compelled therefore to believe that somewhere in the Trent they had their breeding ground and only appeared on rare occasions to foretell disaster to the family. If we are prepared to believe in phenomena no less strange which are supposed to make their appearance in like circumstances in other families, we must accept the Clifton sturgeon. But whatever the truth of the matter, the fact that Aubrey knew and repeated the legend without surprise proves that stories of this nature were reasonably common in his day.

Similar beliefs are also to be met with in Scotland. The Kirkpatricks of Closeburn, in Dumfries, possessed a family talisman in the shape of two swans that appeared every summer at the castle and haunted the nearby lake in the grounds. Some strange tales are related of these two birds which were regarded as the harbingers of good fortune to the family, and on two occasions their arrival is said to have resulted in the sudden recovery from serious illness of members of the house. For a hundred and fifty years they are said to have come yearly to Closeburn, until on some occasion young Robert Kirkpatrick, the heir, shot one of them, since when one only has appeared and at rare intervals, with a bloody mark upon its breast, to presage disaster for the family³. Here, however, we enter upon the superphysical, a matter that has no very intimate association with our subject.

¹ Camden's *Britannia*, edit. Gough, 1789, vol. iii, p. 46

² *Miscellanyes*, edit. 1895, p. 40

³ John Bernard Burke *Family Romance*, 1853, pp. 200-212.

The Horn of Tutbury was not the only talisman—if ever it were one—that the Lords Ferrers of Chartley owned. It was William Ferrers, Earl of Derby, who about 1225 collected a herd of wild cattle from the remnants left in Needwood Forest, and enclosed them in his own park at Chartley. And these beasts have locally been held to be the talismans of the Lords of Chartley. John Timbs, F.S.A., says that “the tradition is said to have originated in a black calf being born in the year of the Battle of Burton Bridge, at which period dates the downfall of the House of Ferrers; and from this time the birth of a parti-coloured Chartley calf has been believed to foretell the death of a member of the Lord’s family.”¹

In 1900 there were still some fifty-five of them but by 1904, when the present Earl Ferrers sold the Chartley estates and thus severed a connection between lord and land that had lasted since the days of William II., the herd had shrunk to less than a dozen.

“At the time of the sale of the estates there were eleven cattle left, among which was a black heifer of two years. The presence of the sable representative in the pure white herd awakened many old stories, and doubtless gave rise to many new ones. Tradition has it that the fate of the cattle is largely bound up with their noble owners. Thus the birth of a black calf, which happened from time to time, was supposed to portend evil to the reigning earl, or, at least, a death in his family, and instances are quoted to support the old superstition. Moreover, it was predicted, long centuries ago, that if once the purity of the herd was contaminated, disaster and ruin would befall the house of Ferrers. Consequently there were those who saw in this black cow a sufficient cause for whatever led to the sale of the estates and the departure from the magnates of Staffordshire of a great and honourable name.

“Nearer to the truth, perhaps, than all these traditions and superstitions was the explanation invariably given by the old keeper: ‘Yes, it means a death all right, but only his own,’ the fact being, of course, that a black calf was always shot as soon as it appeared, so that the purity of colouring of the herd should not be sullied.

¹ John Timbs *Abbeys, Castles and Ancient Halls of England and Wales*, vol. 1, p. 408

"The remnant of the herd [reduced by some tuberculous disease] was offered for sale by public auction in London, but ineffectively, and they were afterwards transferred by private treaty to the Duke of Bedford, at Woburn Abbey. As if their misfortunes had not already been sufficiently great, it remains to be added that the train in which they were conveyed caught fire, and three of the wretched animals suffered death in consequence."¹

Other herds of these splendid white beasts survive or survived until recently elsewhere in the British Isles. The herd at Gisburn, in Yorkshire, died out in 1859. But the herd at Chillingham, in Northumberland, still continues to thrive, I believe, and has attached to it, so I have heard, a tradition similar to that at Chartley. Mr. Hindmarsh, who visited Chillingham in June, 1838, being concerned solely with the scientific interest of the local fauna, merely notes that—"About half a dozen [of the cattle] have had small brown or blue spots upon the cheeks and necks, but these, with any defective ones, were always destroyed." A fourth herd roams the park at Cadzow, in Lanarkshire, all that is left of the once great Forest of Caledonia. The Castle of Cadzow, once the residence of Alexander II. and Alexander III., was conferred by the Bruce upon the Hamiltons. In this instance no omens fatal to the house of Hamilton are drawn from the doings or conditions of the herd—

" Mightest of all the beasts of chase
That roam in woody Caledon,"

Or none was at least known to Walter Scott. The Wizard of the North would never have neglected to introduce such a pleasing piece of superstition, had it existed or been known to him, into his ballad of *Cadzow Castle*.²

¹ *Memorials of Old Staffordshire*, edit W. Beresford, 1909, *Historic Chartley*, by H. Wells Bladen, pp. 191-192.

² An entry in Abraham de la Pryme's *Diary* under the date August 12th, 1696 hints at the one time existence of another herd in Lincolnshire. The diarist notes that the Dymokes of Scrivelsby held certain land "by exhibiting, on a certain day every year, a milk-white bull with black ears to the people, who are to run it down, and then it is cutt in pieces and given amongst the poor" (*Surtree Soc.* vol. liv, p. 109). This yearly sacrifice entails the belief in a herd from which the victim could be selected, and this periodical offering combined with in-breeding accounts for the total disappearance of the herd. In this instance the cattle were "lucks" in that they enabled the Dymokes to

Less well known than the legend relating to the white cattle of Chartley is one that refers to the goats of Rugeley in the same county. The local saw runs that—"When the goats die out Bagot will be gone." And as recently as 1933 country folk of Rugeley and Abbots Bromley were repeating the ancient tradition, that links the fortunes of the Bagots with the herd of wild goats that from before the days of William the Conqueror roamed through Needwood Forest. The goats are the totem and the luck of the Bagots. In days of adversity and prosperity alike the goat has been their emblem. A goat's head of silver, horned with gold, is their crest; two ramping goats support their arms. And the little herd of black and white long-horned beasts has grown and multiplied in the glades of the forest as successive Lords of the Manor brought wealth and fame to their line. Now within living memory the herd has shrunk from two hundred to sixty. And the fortunes of the Bagots would seem to be shrinking with it.

The late Lord Bagot, whose promising youth was followed by an old age passed in unapproachable seclusion, refused to sell his trees when others were reaping the famine prices of the war. But the last of the forest, beneath whose oaks John of Gaunt hunted, was sold on September 1st, 1933, to re-pay the Crown in death duties far more than it gave to the Bagots eight hundred years before. Only a fraction of the forest around the manor itself remains to the new Lord Bagot, a distant childless relative of his predecessor. But the miracle of the estate, "Bagot's Walking Stick," which stands sheer for seventy feet without a branch, was withdrawn at the last moment by Lord Bagot for its name's sake.

If the goats must die out, as would seem by no means unlikely, let us hope that the Walking Stick will take their place as the Luck of the Bagots.

The most famous of these animal palladia are perhaps the Barbary apes that haunt the Rock of Gibraltar, the only wild monkeys in Europe. When and how they first came to the Rock is unrecorded; but large numbers were

perform an act by which they held some of their lands. The practice is forcefully reminiscent of the annual "bull-running" that used to take place at the Ferrers' castle of Tutbury.

certainly imported for some unknown purpose in 1740, and were subsequently subjected to a poll-tax. They had, however, been established there at a much earlier date, and have apparently lived there perfectly happily for several hundred years, existing on the sweet roots of the Palmitos and prickly pears, a dietary that is varied by occasional raids upon the garrison gardens for figs, almonds and nuts. Strangely enough they will not touch oranges. The animals are tail-less and perfectly harmless, and live on the higher levels of the Rock, though in dull weather they frequently come down to the Trafalgar cemetery. Gibraltar, as every schoolboy should know, but probably does not, was taken from the Spaniards in 1704, and local legend asserts that the extinction of the colony of apes will presage the downfall of the Empire and the abandonment of the Rock by the British. In 1862 or a little earlier, according to Captain Sayer, the apes were "virtually extinct. Formerly they were seen in troops gambolling along precipices, but their numbers have gradually declined, till but four were believed to remain."¹ And this remarkable diminution of their numbers coincided with the Mutiny, the death of the Prince Consort and other disasters. Fortunately since then their ranks have increased and according to statistics—possibly not very reliable but sufficiently exact for our present purpose—their strength during the last thirty years seems to have remained steadily at about thirty.

Tales of a submarine passage by means of which the Barbary apes travel between the Rock of Gibraltar and the African coast, have inspired at least one writer of sensational fiction. Without attempting to investigate the bases of such stories, we can at least say that they present no more astonishing features than the legends relating to many other Lucks and Talismans with which this book is concerned.

¹ Sayer *The History of Gibraltar*, 1862, pp. 454 and 455

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE LUCK OF EDENHALL

IN Notes and Queries for June 24th, 1933 (pp. 436-437) Mr Douglas Hamer printed an invaluable bibliography of Wharton's "true and lamentable ballad." My own, which differs from his only in that it includes one or two later printings which did not come within the scope of his survey, was already prepared at the time I offer it here with no apology for so doing. As, however, I feel that in this, the first reasonably complete study of the Luck, the legend of the Luck of Edenhall, and of the bacchic effusion to which it gave rise, the sources of that study should be available to the student in a more complete form than is possible in foot-notes. I have added to this list bibliographical references to other and later versions of the legend, and to books and periodicals in which either the legend or the goblet, or both, have been referred to or in the case of the latter have been illustrated.

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First Version

"GOD prosper long our noble KING
And likewise *Edenhall*,
A doleful drinking Bout, I sing,
There lately did befall"

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A doleful drinking bout I sing,
There lately did befall"

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(Coloured sketch of the cup and photograph of the case)

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF THE DRINKING MATCH, OR THE EARL'S
DEFEAT

- Duke Phillip*: Philip Wharton, Marquis of Wharton, created Duke of Wharton, January 28th, 1717-18. Born 1698, outlawed 1729, died in Catalonia 1731
Andrius and Hotham Llewellynn Jewitt identified these two characters with two reigning beauties of the day. (*The Reliquary*, vol. xix, p. 148 note.)
Sir Kit: Sir Christopher Musgrave of Edenhall, fifth baronet, died 1753.
Lloyd of Ganghall: Has not been identified.
Mr. Sheriff: Lancelot Machell of Crackenthorpe Hall, Appleby, who died "in the year 1767, in the 88th year of his age, having been many years sheriff of the county [Westmorland] under the right honourable the earl of Thanet" (Nicolson and Burn: *A History of Cumberland*, vol. i, p. 351). He was appointed under sheriff by Lord Thanet on Oct. 24th, 1715. On Oct. 19th, 1710, he married Deborah, daughter of Richard Baynes of Appleby.
Sir Baynes: Richard Baynes of Appleby. He refers to a then very recent visit of Wharton to Edenhall in a letter addressed to Col James Graham, dated Appleby, September 15th, 1721 (*Hist MSS. Com.—10th Rep. Appendix pt. w, p. 344—Manuscripts belonging to Capt. J. F. Bagot*.) Other letters from him between 1714 and 1717 are to be found on pp. 343 and 344. He was probably a

son of John Baynes of Appleby elected mayor of Appleby in 1714. (Letter from Bishop Nicholson of Carlisle to James Lowther, Oct. 9th, 1714—*Hist. MSS. Comm. 13th Rep. App.*, pt. vii, p. 248—*The Manuscripts of the Earl of Lonsdale*.)

Earl Harold: Anthony Earl of Harold, born February 21st, 1695-6, was the son of Henry Grey, Duke of Kent, and 2nd Baron Lucas. K.G. He married February 17th, 1718, Mary, daughter and co-heiress of Thomas, 6th Earl of Thanet. He died on July 21st, 1723. He is referred to in Anthony Alsop's Ode to Sir John Dolben (*Odorum Libri duo*, p. 79 and note p. 92).

Sir Musgrave of Martindale: Probably Sir Richard Musgrave, Bart., of Hayton Castle, Cumberland (d. 1739), who succeeded his father, Sir Richard, in 1711. The Musgraves of Hayton Castle were descended from William Musgrave of Hayton Castle and Johnby Hall (d. 1597) who married Isabel, daughter and co-heiress of James Martindale, of Newton in Allendale. Johnby Hall went to the junior branch of the family. (See William Hutchinson—*An History of Cumberland*, vol. ii, p. 289.)

The actual manor of Martindale apparently never belonged to the Musgraves. Nicolson and Burn (*A History of Cumberland*, vol. i, p. 410) says that—"The manor, like as of Barton, came from the Multons by marriage to the Dacres; and now, [1777,] by purchase belongs to . . . Edward Hassel, esquire."

Our Royal Prince: George, Prince of Wales, afterwards King George II., whose reconciliation with the King took place in 1720.

The two following characters were inserted in verses xxiv and xxxviii of Curll's and other later editions of the Ballad.

Earl Thanet: Sackville Tufton, Earl of Thanet of Appleby Castle, died 1754.

The Duchess fat: Countess Ehrengard Melusina von der Schulenburg (1667-1743) created Duchess of Munster (among other titles) in June, 1716, and Duchess of Kendal (again among other titles) in March, 1719, and in January, 1723, Princess of the Empire as Princess of Eberstein by the Emperor Charles VI. Far from being fat, she was called the "May-pole" by the London mob on account of her thinness.

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